

Media Storm



Trump Rejects Criticism of His Proposal to Ban Muslims

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally in Davenport, Iowa. Trump on Tuesday stood by his call to block all Muslims from entering the United States, even as the idea was widely condemned as un-American.

(AP Photo/Charlie Neibergall)

**JILL COLVIN
BRUCE SMITH
Associated Press
MOUNT PLEASANT, South Carolina (AP)** — Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's call to block Muslims from entering the United States is being met with a chorus of near-universal condemnation from across the country and around the globe. From the halls of Congress to 10 Downing Street, Trump's statement Monday advocating a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" was blasted as big-

oted, unconstitutional and potentially dangerous for American interests abroad. British Prime Minister David Cameron, breaking the custom of British leaders not commenting on U.S. presidential contenders, slammed it as "divisive, unhelpful and quite simply wrong." U.N. spokesman Farhan Haq said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon denounced "any kind of rhetoric that relies on Islamophobia, xenophobia, any other appeal to hate any groups." The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints issued a statement

in support of religious freedom. Even Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling weighed in, decrying Trump on Twitter as worse than her fictional villain Lord Voldemort. "This is not conservatism," Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan told reporters after a closed-door Republican caucus meeting. "What was proposed yesterday is not what this party stands for, and more importantly it's not what this country stands for." Trump's campaign has been marked by a pattern of inflammatory statements, dating back to rhet-

oric that some Mexican immigrants, who entered the country illegally, are drug smugglers and rapists — but even that didn't evoke the same widespread level of contempt. The billionaire businessman and former reality television star has maintained his lead in early opinion surveys, despite the controversies, vexing his Republican rivals and alarming a Republican establishment in panic over the damage they fear he's doing to a deeply divided party.

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Special Report: Washington, Baghdad on different pages in the fight against Islamic State militants

SUSANNAH GEORGE

Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — A series of political spats in Baghdad over the past week surrounding foreign forces on Iraqi soil have exposed the increasing weakness of Iraq's prime minister and a disconnect between Washington and Baghdad in the fight against the Islamic State group.

Turkish troops deploying to a base near the Islamic State-held city of Mosul sparked outrage in Baghdad. Despite Turkey's insistence that the troops were part of a training mission coordinated with top Iraqi officials, al-Abadi said late Sunday that if Turkey did not withdraw its troops within 48 hours Iraq would bring the matter to the U.N.

A similar dynamic was on display when U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter recently said the U.S. military would deploy a new special operations force to Iraq, only to have the proposal shot down by al-Abadi.

"Iraq does not need foreign ground forces and the Iraqi government is committed not to allow the presence



A Kurdish fighter walks past a destroyed building in the town of Sinjar, after they took it from the Islamic State group in a joint operation with the coalition forces. A series of political spats that erupted in Baghdad over the past week surrounding foreign forces on Iraqi soil have exposed the increasing weakness of Iraq's central government and a growing disconnect between Washington and Baghdad in the U.S.-led coalition's fight against the Islamic State group.

(AP Photo/Bram Janssen)

As Iraq struggles to push IS out of the vast areas still under the extremists' control, it has been caught in a tug-of-war between Iran, which exerts great influence over the Shiite-led government and provides crucial support to its ground forces, and the U.S.-led coalition, which is providing vital air support.

As Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has struggled to please both sides, he has come to be seen by many as weak and indecisive, further undermining efforts to defeat the extremists. The challenge he faces was thrown into sharp relief by two recent controversies over foreign forces.

Exaggerated media reports in recent days of

Security Council.

A few hundred Turkish troops have been present in Iraq for months, working to train Kurdish peshmerga fighters and Sunni militiamen.

Their presence, while not publicly advertised, appears to have been done in coordination with both Baghdad and the semi-autonomous Kurdish regional government in northern Iraq.

The uproar may have been driven in part by Iran, which is at loggerheads with Turkey over Syria's civil war. Iran is a key ally of Syrian President Bashar Assad, while Turkey is a leading supporter of the rebels fighting to overthrow him, which both Iran and Syria view as "terrorists."

of any ground force on Iraqi land," the prime minister said in a statement.

Hadi al-Amiri, the head of the Badr Organization, one of Iraq's most powerful Iranian-backed Shiite militias, went a step further, saying any U.S. base in Iraq would be considered a "target."

There are already some 3,500 U.S. troops in Iraq on a training and support mission to help Iraqi forces battle the IS group. Al-Abadi's spokesman later walked back the prime minister's comments, saying the government had requested more overflights, weapons and equipment.

"There will be special forces on board the aircraft," the spokesman, Saad al-Hadithi, told The Associated Press. □

Report: American, US resident fighters defect from al-Shabab

ABDI GULED

Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — The defections of two fighters, an American and a U.S. resident, from Somalia's Islamic extremist rebels highlight tensions within al-Shabab over whether it should remain affiliated to al-Qaida or switch allegiance to the Islamic State group, an al-Shabab commander said Tuesday. Foreign fighters are being alienated and feel trapped in Somalia over suspicions that they are plotting to switch allegiance to the Islamic State group fighting in Syria and Iraq, Abu Mohammed, a military commander with Al-Shabab told The Associated Press. The "ambitions" by some foreign fighters in al-Shabab to join the Islamic State group had led to them to be isolated within the Somali group and even face death at the hands of their erstwhile comrades-in-arms.

An American who had been fighting with al-Shabab left the rebels and was arrested by Somalia's security forces on Monday. Abdimalik Jones, who said he is from San Diego, was arrested in the southern port of Barawe, said African Union spokesman Col. Paul Njuguna.

Jones claimed he fled al-Shabab because of rifts within the group, said an official with Somali security forces who insisted on anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the press. Jones is missing the index finger of his right hand, said the official.

Separately an American resident, a Minnesota man named Mohamed Abdullahi Hassan who joined al-Shabab in Somalia more than seven years ago, surrendered to Somalia's federal government on Nov. 6, the U.S. State Department said in an email to the AP. Hassan was a lawful permanent resident of the U.S. but not an American citizen.

Hassan had been fighting with al-Shabab but recently went online to urge others to carry out violence on behalf of IS. He was among those wanted by the FBI for allegedly providing material support to al-Shabab, and he faces several terrorism charges in the United States.

State Department spokeswoman Pooja Jhunjhunwala said Hassan is in the custody of the Somali National Intelligence and Security Agency in Mogadishu. She said the U.S. is discussing the case with the Somali Federal Government, but noted that the U.S. does not have an extradition agreement with Somalia.

In a phone interview Tuesday with Voice of America, Hassan said he has no intention of returning to America.

"Any crimes that I have committed, if there is any, it is done over here in Somalia," he told Voice of America. "If I am to be going to court, it is going to be in Somalia not in America."

Hassan, who was speaking from prison, said he wasn't tied to the Islamic State group. "I am not part of ISIS and I have nothing to do with any other group or any other jihadi movement," he said.

Hassan said he joined al-Shabab to help defend against the Ethiopian intervention in Somalia, but he left the group in 2013 "because of the oppression that they are doing on the people, the way they are killing people, and the imprisonment of innocent people and the torture without no evidence at all." He said that last month, al-Shabab members raided his home and terrorized his family, Voice of America reported. He said that he escaped, but was later arrested by government forces.

The defections of Hassan and Jones show tensions within al-Shabab, according to Mohammed. □

Trump Rejects Criticism of His Proposal to Ban Muslims

Continued from front

Trump, who appears to revel in the attention, didn't back down from his proposal Tuesday, saying that banning Muslims "until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on" is warranted after last month's attacks by Muslim extremists in Paris and last week's shootings in San Bernardino, California.

"I don't care about them," Trump told CNN Tuesday in a telephone interview, when asked about denunciation by Republican leaders. He said the country needs to recognize that it's at war.

Trump's proposed ban would apply to immigrants and visitors alike, a sweeping prohibition affecting adherents of a religion practiced by more than a billion people worldwide. Trump clarified in a round of television interviews Tuesday that his proposed ban would not apply to American citizens traveling abroad and would allow exemptions for certain people, including the leaders of Middle Eastern countries and athletes for certain sporting events.

However, not specified in his list of exemptions, for example, are Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai and the four civil society groups that led Tunisia's transition to democracy — all Muslim Nobel Peace Prize winners. Since the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris that killed 130 people and wounded hundreds, some other Republican presidential contenders

have proposed restrictions on refugees and tighter surveillance in the U.S. But Trump's proposal goes far further, prompting a new round of criticism.

Sen. Lindsey Graham said Trump's rhetoric risked inflaming tensions in the Middle East, playing into the recruiting strategy of Islamic State militants, who have framed their battle as a war between Islam and the West.

"He's putting our soldiers and diplomats at risk, he's empowering the enemy," said Graham, another Republican presidential contender, in an interview with CNN. Trump, he said, is making new enemies of people "who came to our side in Iraq and Afghanistan and who are under siege in their own countries."

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, another Trump rival, suggested Trump's comments were helping violent extremists gain strength.

"They want us to marginalize Muslims so that they move in their direction, rather than in ours."

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson also weighed in, telling MSNBC: "I believe that it's the responsibility of those of us in national security and homeland security, when a leading candidate for office proposes something that is irresponsible, probably illegal, unconstitutional, and contrary to international law, un-American, and will actually hurt our efforts at homeland security and national security, we have to speak out." □

House tightens controls on visa-free travel to US

ERICA WERNER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Driven by the Paris terror attacks, the House voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to tighten controls on travel to the U.S. and require visas for anyone who's been in Iraq or Syria in the previous five years.

The legislation takes aim

at the "visa waiver" program that allows citizens of 38 countries to travel to the U.S. for stays of 90 days and less without first obtaining a visa from an embassy or consulate. Belgium and France, home to most of the perpetrators of last month's Paris attacks, are among the participating countries. □



At a news conference following a closed-door GOP caucus meeting, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, R-Wis., dismissed Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's comments on Muslims, saying such views are "not what this party stands for and more importantly it's not what this country stands for," at the Republican National Headquarters on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

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US Democrats seek spotlight to curb terror suspects' guns

ALAN FRAM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats took to the floors of the Senate and House on Tuesday to draw attention to their drive to prevent suspected violent extremists from obtaining guns, an issue they believe has gained potency from last week's shooting massacre in California.

Facing certain defeat, Democrats in both chambers unsuccessfully tried forcing votes on legislation that would let the government prohibit firearms sales to people suspected of terror acts. Debate, livid at times, came days after a Muslim couple who federal authorities say adopted extremist views killed 14 people last week in San Bernardino, California.

Sen. Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, called it "absolute insanity" that suspected violent extremists are not already among the categories of people barred from purchasing firearms from gun dealers. Without naming them, he blamed the gap on the National Rifle Association,

which for years has used an alliance with gun-rights lawmakers, mostly Republicans, to block gun control legislation in Congress.

"We can't let a small group, an influential, powerful lobbying group, make Americans less safe," Schumer said.

No. 2 Senate Republican leader John Cornyn blocked debate on the legislation, which is sponsored by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat and a longtime advocate of gun curbs.

He offered his own plan giving the government 72 hours to delay gun sales to those suspected of terror acts and persuade a judge to block that sale, and letting the government immediately arrest the suspect. Democrats blocked that.

Cornyn said Democrats were trying to "capitalize" on last week's California shootings "to justify this unconstitutional attempt to deny American citizens their core constitutional rights," such as gun ownership. The Senate last week rejected Feinstein's pro-



Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y. discusses gun control during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington. Democrats took to the floors of the Senate and House on Tuesday to draw attention to their drive to prevent suspected violent extremists from obtaining guns.

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

posals and a Cornyn proposal similar to Tuesday's. Republicans have reacted to the San Bernardino killings by emphasizing national security, pushing legislation stiffening restrictions on refugees and travel to the U.S. In the House, Democrats led by Rep. Mike Thompson, a California Democrat and

a leading gun control advocate, forced a series of procedural votes to protest Republican leaders' refusal to allow debate on legislation by Rep. Peter King, a Republican, that is similar to Feinstein's. Rep. Scott Perry, a Republican, drew boos and catcalls from Democrats when he railed against the "fool's errand" of their push for

a gun control vote. "They have no idea what it takes to get on the no-fly list," Perry said. He said that list is maintained by "the same administration that persecutes its citizens" with the Internal Revenue Service, a reference to the 2013 outcry over that agency's intense scrutiny of some conservative groups seeking tax exemptions. □

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Supreme Court justices weigh the meaning of 'one person, one vote'

MARK SHERMAN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Supreme Court is treading gingerly on a question of immense importance to the growing Latino population in the U.S. : whether states must count all residents, or only eligible voters, in drawing electoral districts. The justices on Tuesday displayed little of the aggressiveness that often marks Supreme Court arguments as they heard a case about the meaning of the principle of "one person, one vote." The court established 50 years ago that districts must be roughly equal in population. Two Texas voters are asking the court to prohibit states from basing electoral maps on total population, instead of the number of eligible voters. They ar-

gue that including children and people who are not citizens inflates the voting power of urban residents and dilutes the votes of rural residents.

Civil rights groups say such a change would damage Latino political influence. Texas picked up four congressional seats after the 2010 census, mainly because of the growth in its Hispanic population.

If the challengers prevail, many of those new Texans would not be counted in drawing legislative district lines because they are too young to vote, not citizens or otherwise prohibited from voting.

Justice Anthony Kennedy at one point wondered whether states could produce districts that were roughly equal in terms of overall population and eligible voters. □

Boston College: 80 sickened after eating at Chipotle



A man walks near a closed Chipotle restaurant in the Cleveland Circle neighborhood of Boston. Chipotle said that it closed the restaurant after several students at Boston College, including members of the men's basketball team, reported "gastrointestinal symptoms" after eating at the chain. The school said it was working with local health officials to determine the cause of the illness. (AP Photo/Steven Senne)

CANDICE CHOI
BOB SALSBERG
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Boston College said Tuesday the number of students complaining of gastrointestinal symptoms after eating at a Chipotle this weekend has climbed to 80, up from the 30 it reported the previous day.

The illnesses prompted the temporary closure of a Chipotle restaurant in Boston where the students ate, and come as the chain's sales are already being slammed by a multistate outbreak of E. coli linked to its restaurants. Chipotle says it thinks the Boston College illnesses are an isolated case of norovirus and unrelated to the E. coli cases that have turned up in nine states.

"All of the evidence we have points in that direction," said Chris Arnold, a Chipotle spokesman.

Boston College said it is working with state health officials and that all students who reported symptoms have been tested for both E. Coli and norovirus. It said results will not be available for at least two days.

According to a report from the Boston Inspectional Services department, which is responsible for inspecting the city's restaurants, an employee at the Chipotle restaurant in Cleveland Circle was sick

while working a shift Thursday.

William Christopher, the department's commissioner, said it was not immediately known if management at Chipotle was aware of the employee's symptoms. He said the restaurant's permit to operate has been suspended by the city and that a disinfection process has begun. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, infected workers cause about 70 percent of reported norovirus outbreaks from contaminated food. Each year, norovirus causes 19 million to 21 million illnesses.

The virus can spread from an infected person, contaminated food or water, or by touching contaminated surfaces, the agency says. It is very contagious and can spread quickly in places such as daycare centers and cruise ships.

Common symptoms include diarrhea, vomiting, nausea and stomach pain. If tests confirm that the Boston illnesses are the result of norovirus, it would support Chipotle's previous statement that whatever ingredient that was likely to blame for the E. coli is out of its restaurants by now.

The CDC has not yet determined the ingredient responsible for sickening 52 people in the E. coli outbreak, but 47 of the

individuals reported eating at a Chipotle before they got ill. The first cases were reported at the end of October in Oregon and Washington, with additional cases being reported later.

The most recent illness started Nov. 13, according to the CDC.

At a presentation Tuesday for analysts in New York City, Chipotle executives noted the exposure period for the E. coli cases appears to be over. The company has said it is tightening its food safety procedures, and that some of its local produce suppliers might not be able to meet the new standards.

Executives said the chain may eventually raise prices to make up for its food

safety investments.

In its annual report, Chipotle has noted it may be at a higher risk for outbreaks of food-borne illnesses because of its "fresh produce and meats rather than frozen, and our reliance on employees cooking with traditional methods rather than automation."

Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc., based in Denver, has more than 1,900 locations, primarily in the U.S. The company has already warned that sales are expected to fall as much as 11 percent at established locations for the fourth quarter as a result of bad publicity from the E. coli cases.

That would mark the first time the sales figure has declined since Chipotle went public in 2006. □

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At Press Time:

Search is on for NFL quarterback Jay Cutler's brother-in-law

BRADY McCOMBS
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Investigators are trying to piece together what happened to NFL quarterback Jay Cutler's brother-in-law, whose hasn't been heard from since his car was found abandoned more than a week ago near a remote dirt road in Utah. Michael Cavallari, 30, lives in Southern California and was arrested on an allegation of making threats there Nov. 23, authorities said Monday. Four days later, a rancher found Cavallari's car with its engine on and the air bag deployed in Utah, Grand County Sheriff Steven White said. It was about 200 miles south of Salt Lake City and 5 miles south of Interstate 70, in a part of the state that's home to several national parks. Cavallari apparently was



Michael Cavallari is seen in this undated photo distributed by the Grand County, Utah Sheriff's Office. Grand County Sheriff Steven White said Monday that a rancher discovered the 30-year-old Cavallari's car early on Nov. 27, the day after Thanksgiving. It was found about 200 miles south of Salt Lake City and 5 miles south of Interstate 70. (Grand County Sheriff's Office via AP)

driving by himself, though it's unclear where he was going, authorities said. He

is the brother of reality TV personality Kristin Cavallari, who married Cutler in 2013. Evidence shows Michael Cavallari's 2014 Honda Civic hit a couple of big rocks and washes, likely causing the air bag to deploy, White said. White said crews have been searching the area on foot and by helicopter but they have found no trace of Michael Cavallari. It's difficult to find footprints in the frozen ground, he added. Temperatures in the area have been at or below freezing every night since the car was found up against a small embankment. There were no signs of foul play. Hours before his Honda was discovered, Michael Cavallari — who lives in San Clemente, California — stopped at a convenience store about 60 miles away and asked for directions to

Salt Lake City. Credit card transactions and surveillance video show he was at the store in the town of Monticello at 3:30 a.m. on Nov. 27. In California, Orange County Sheriff's Lt. Jeffrey Hallock said Monday that deputies arrested Michael Cavallari on suspicion of making criminal threats Nov. 23. He bailed out of jail Nov. 25. He was arrested outside Dana Point City Hall with a loaded shotgun following a report from a woman who called the sheriff's department to say he had been outside her apartment with a shotgun, according to a police report. The unnamed woman told deputies the two had argued days earlier, and she was afraid because he kept returning to her apartment. Police reported smelling alcohol on Michael Cavallari's breath

when he was arrested. He acknowledged having a loaded shotgun in his trunk, the report said. He was taken into custody without incident, and he denied doing anything to the woman, who reported the incidents to authorities. Michael Cavallari works for his father's corporation, White said. He is single and has no kids. Kristin Cavallari rose to fame in the mid-2000s when she appeared in the MTV reality series "Laguna Beach" and "The Hills." She and Cutler have three children together. On Monday, Kristin Cavallari posted a photo on Instagram of her and her brother as kids at the beach with a message thanking people for their thoughts and prayers. "We remain hopeful and I will share any news that we receive," she wrote. Cutler starred collegiately at Vanderbilt and now plays for the Chicago Bears in the NFL. The 32-year-old said little Sunday when asked about whether the situation with his missing brother-in-law was a factor in his team's loss. "No," Cutler said. "We stayed focused, and we adjust better than anybody." Cutler's head coach, John Fox, said Monday he's aware of the situation but doesn't know much about it. Fox said the franchise provides resources for players to deal with off-field issues, including sports psychologists. □

'Brick City' cast member shot dead in Newark, New Jersey

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — A former gang member turned anti-violence activist who was featured in "Brick City," a Sundance Channel documentary series set in New Jersey's largest city, has been shot to death, authorities said Tuesday. Darel Evans, 33, was shot in Newark late Monday night and was pronounced dead at the scene, Essex County prosecutors said. A motive for the shooting remains under investigation, they said.

Further details were not immediately released, including what type of weapon was used or how many assailants may have been involved. Evans, a reformed Crips gang member known as Creep, was profiled in the Peabody award-winning TV series for turning his life around and for his relationship with a woman from the rival Bloods gang. The series, which chronicles city officials' and residents' efforts to improve New-

ark, first aired in 2009. The couple were also featured along with their children in a follow-up Pivot TV documentary series, "Jersey Strong." "It's hard to extract yourself from the level of violence in urban America," said Mark Benjamin, who created both shows along with partner Marc Levin. "As hard as he tried, it caught up with him. He was writing, he was doing comedy and sketches and he had different jobs. He had different chil-

dren from a few different women. He had lots of love to give. The street caught up with him." Evans' story line focused on how he went from being an active gang member to a mentor for at-risk youth after he realized that his friends were either getting locked up in prison or dying, with no real option in between. "The senseless violence of young black men dying on the streets of America is a sick, sick situation," Benjamin said. □

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US Financial Front:

Small businesses in limbo as Congress debates tax break

JOYCE M. ROSENBERG
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) —

Small business owners are on edge as they wait to see if Congress will approve a big increase in the tax break they get to buy new equipment.

The so-called Section 179 deduction, which is aimed at helping small businesses grow, is caught up in a debate over a number of tax provisions. Lawmakers are haggling over whether to raise the \$25,000 deduction to \$500,000 for the current tax year only, or to make the higher level permanent for future years. If they can't reach an agreement, the deduction would remain at the lower amount. Congress had hoped to wrap up a \$1.1 trillion spending bill that includes the Section 179 deduction by midnight this Friday. But talks on the bill have stalled and it's not known when lawmakers might reach an agreement. The inaction has left small business owners like Vicki and Charles Phaneuf in limbo. The couple wants to purchase \$30,000 in chairs for their party rental company, CE Rental. But if Congress doesn't approve an increase in the deduction, they won't be able to afford them. The Phaneufs, whose company is in Raleigh, North Carolina,

have already used up the \$25,000 deduction on a truck and other equipment. "It's delayed our making any purchases that weren't absolutely necessary," Vicki Phaneuf says.

The Section 179 deduction, named for a provision in the federal tax law, allows a small business to deduct up front the entire cost of equipment ranging from computers to furniture to vehicles and machinery. The deduction is \$25,000, but lawmakers vote every year on whether to increase that amount for the current year.

Before the recession, the deduction was fairly predictable; it rose to keep up with inflation. Congress nearly doubled it to \$250,000 for 2008 to stimulate the economy during the recession and kept it at that level for 2009. Congress raised it to \$500,000 for each of the next five years, but often lawmakers didn't OK the larger deduction until December of each year. The House passed a bill early this year calling for the higher deduction, but it stalled in the Senate.

Not being able to predict the size of the deduction from one year to the next makes it difficult for a small-business to plan for expansion; many companies rely on their tax savings to fund their growth because it's



CE Rental co-owner Vicki Phaneuf poses for a photo at her party rental company in Raleigh, N.C. Small business owners are on edge as they wait to see if Congress will approve a big increase in the tax break they get to buy new equipment this year.

(AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

hard for them to get bank loans, says Lawrence Nanis, a certified public accountant in Waltham, Massachusetts. Many also have money set aside for taxes in case they don't get the big deduction, and that's money they can't use to buy equipment.

The owners of Hobby Works, a chain of four stores in Maryland and Virginia, want to open more locations but have been stymied because they can't plan ahead, co-owner Mike Brey says.

Even if the deduction for

2015 does turn out to be \$500,000, he can't buy all the necessary showcases to outfit it by the end of the year — the tax law requires equipment to be delivered and in use by Dec. 31 in order to qualify for the deduction. And he can't start a search for a location unless he knows he'll get the tax break.

"You can't wake up in the morning and say, 'I'm going to open a store tomorrow,'" Brey says.

Small businesses that sell equipment also are affected. Sales at farm equip-

ment seller St. Joseph's Equipment are down 15 percent to 20 percent this year, and chief financial officer Sherry Wuebben says the uncertainty about the Section 179 deduction has kept farmers from buying.

"If they had known (a \$500,000 deduction) was coming, they would have been visiting us," says Wuebben, whose company is based in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Her company's equipment including tractors, combines and threshers ranges from \$25,000 to \$500,000. □

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Russia launches new airstrikes in Syria; 1st from submarine



Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, meets with Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu in the Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015. Shoigu reported to Putin that the Kalibr cruise missiles launched by the Rostov-on-Don submarine in the Mediterranean Sea successfully hit the designated targets in the Syrian city of Raqqa.

(Mikhail Klimentyev/Sputnik, Kremlin, via AP)

V. ISACHENKOV
Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia has unleashed another barrage of airstrikes against targets in Syria, including the first combat launch of a new cruise missile from a Russian submarine in the Mediterranean Sea, the country's defense minister said Tuesday.

The Kalibr cruise missiles launched by the Rostov-on-Don submarine successfully hit the designated targets in Raqqa, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reported

to President Vladimir Putin. The submarine was in a submerged position during the launch, he added.

Putin noted that the new cruise missile can be equipped with both conventional and nuclear warheads, adding he hopes that the latter "will never be needed."

Shoigu said Tu-22 bombers flying from their base in Russia also took part in the latest raids, performing 60 combat sorties in the last three days.

He said the targets de-

stroyed in the latest wave of Russian airstrikes included a munitions depot, a factory manufacturing mortar rounds and oil facilities belonging to "terrorists."

Shoigu said the Russian military had informed Israel and the United States about the airstrikes before launching them.

A U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly, confirmed that Russia notified the U.S. in advance.

The U.S. official said at least 10 cruise missiles were launched from Russian surface ships in the Caspian Sea and at least one missile was fired by a Russian submarine in the eastern Mediterranean.

Russia has carried out its air campaign in Syria since Sept. 30, using warplanes at an air base in Syria's coastal province of Latakia, as well as navy ships and long-range bombers flying from their bases in Russia. While Moscow said its action has been focused on the Islamic State group, the U.S. and its allies have criticized Moscow for also striking moderate rebel groups opposed to Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Shoigu told Putin that Syrian army forces had overtaken the area near the border with Turkey where a Turkish jet shot down a Russian warplane on Nov 24. He showed Putin the plane's flight recorder, which he said Syrian and Russian troops had recovered from the crash site.

Putin ordered the flight recorder to be studied in the presence of foreign experts, adding that the data will show the plane's flight path.

Moscow's relations with Ankara have been badly

strained over the downing. Turkey said it shot down the aircraft after it violated Turkey's airspace for 17 seconds despite repeated warnings.

Russia has insisted the warplane had stayed in Syria's airspace, and responded by deploying long-range air defense missiles at its air base in Syria and introducing a slew of economic sanctions against Turkey.

"We had treated Turkey not only as a friendly country, but as an ally in the fight against terrorism, and we couldn't expect such a mean, treacherous stab in the back," Putin said.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova dismissed Turkey's complaint about a sailor on a Russian navy vessel pictured on its deck with a portable air-defense missile while the ship was cruising across the Bosphorus. Turkey denounced the incident as a provocation and summoned the Russian ambassador to protest.

Zakharova responded Tuesday by saying the Russian crew had the right to protect its vessel and insisted that the action didn't contradict the Montreux Convention, which sets international rules for using the Turkish straits. □

Iraqi forces seize neighborhood on outskirts of IS-held city

QASSIM ZAHRA
Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqi troops battling the Islamic State group on Tuesday captured a neighborhood on the outskirts of militant-held Ramadi and a provincial operations center to the north of the city, officials said.

It was the first significant incursion into Ramadi since

Iraq announced a major offensive last month aimed at taking back the provincial capital. Iraqi troops backed by Shiite militiamen recently seized the Palestine Bridge, a main gateway, completing their encirclement of the city.

Sabah al-Numani, a spokesman for an Iraqi counterterrorism unit fighting in Ramadi, said that while much of

the former operations center had been destroyed by IS fighters, the Iraqi flag had been raised above one of the remaining buildings. He said Iraqi troops also liberated the southwestern Tamim neighborhood.

"This area is considered an important region for Daesh," al-Numani said, using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

He cautioned that there is still a long battle ahead, and that Warar River, a tributary of the Euphrates, separates the troops in Tamim from the center of Ramadi.

"We cannot give a specific time we will liberate the city," he said, adding that IS had "destroyed many of the bridges" over the river. Col. Steven Warren, the spokesman for the U.S.-led

coalition in Baghdad, said Iraqi forces had reported to the coalition that they had cleared the Tamim neighborhood. "Tamim overlooks downtown Ramadi and provides an important tactical advantage," Warren said. IS captured Ramadi in May, dealing the biggest blow to Iraqi forces since the fall of the city of Mosul in the summer of 2014. □

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France urges EU to act faster against extremist funding



France's Finance Minister Michel Sapin, right, talks with European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs Pierre Moscovici at the EU Council building in Brussels. Sapin urged his European Union partners on Tuesday to speed up efforts to cut off funds to extremists groups. (AP Photo/Geert Vanden Wijngaert)

LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — France urged its European Union partners on Tuesday to speed up efforts to cut off funds to extremists groups, nearly a month after the Paris attacks.

"We have to go faster, but also further, stronger," French Finance Minister Michel Sapin told reporters

after talks with his EU counterparts in Brussels.

Based in part on a list of measures suggested by France, the ministers discussed ways to better track financial transfers, control prepaid bank cards, freeze assets and limit movements of cash and precious metals.

But no firm decisions were taken, and the EU's ex-

ecutive Commission was tasked with drawing up a list of priorities for their next meeting in January.

The Nov. 13 attacks in the French capital, in which 130 people were killed and hundreds injured, have highlighted the need for new finance tracking measures. But Sapin warned that "the dates for adopting these measures

are far away. Terrorists are there, so we must act more quickly." Some steps were announced after the attacks on satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo and a kosher supermarket in Paris in January, and the shootings at a free speech debate in Copenhagen the following month, but more are being floated.

France wants to bolster the powers of financial intelligence teams that analyze suspicious transactions, and to work with the U.S. on "terrorist financing."

It is calling for a system for freezing assets to be broadened from bank accounts to property, vehicles and any benefits that suspects might receive.

It also wants tighter controls and improved transparency on the use of virtu-

al currencies or electronic money forms like pre-paid cards, which allow small amounts to be sent anonymously.

Paris is also calling for more border checks on the transfer of cash, gold, precious metals and pre-paid cards by freight, particularly air freight, as a customs declaration is only required if the amounts exceed 10,000 euros (\$10,860).

The measures would include a crackdown on the illicit trade in cultural goods amid fears that extremists are selling or smuggling artefacts looted from archaeological sites or museums.

The culture ministers of Germany, France and Italy added to pressure for action to curb the use of looted art as a source of extremist financing. □

London mayor: Trump's comments 'nonsense'

LONDON (AP) — Donald Trump's comments about London are "nonsense," the city's mayor said Tuesday, inviting the U.S. Republican presidential hopeful to come and see for himself.

Trump, who on Monday called for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States," told MSNBC that some parts of London "are so radicalized that the police are afraid for their own lives."

But London Mayor Boris

Johnson, a Conservative, said Trump's "ill-informed comments are complete and utter nonsense."

Joining a long list of British politicians criticizing Trump, Johnson said he would "welcome the opportunity to show Mr. Trump firsthand some of the excellent work our police officers do every day in local neighborhoods throughout our city."

"Crime has been falling steadily both in London and in New York — and the only reason I wouldn't go to some parts of New York

is the real risk of meeting Donald Trump," Johnson said.

London's Metropolitan Police force said Trump "could not be more wrong" about their city and was "welcome to receive a briefing from the Met Police on the reality of policing London." Prime Minister David Cameron, another Conservative, also criticized Trump's statements about Muslims — breaking the custom of British leaders not commenting on U.S. presidential contenders. □

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Pope: Mercy trumps moralizing as he opens Vatican Holy Door

NICOLE WINFIELD
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis pushed open the great bronze doors of St. Peter's Basilica on Tuesday to launch his Holy Year of Mercy, declaring that mercy trumps moralizing in his Catholic Church.

Francis stood in prayer on the threshold of the basilica's Holy Door then walked through it, the first of an estimated 10 million faithful who will pass through over the course of the next year in a rite of pilgrimage dating back centuries.

A thin and frail Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI walked through the doorway right after Francis, gingerly negotiating the two steps with the help of a cane and his longtime assistant. It was a rare outing for the 88-year-old Benedict, whose historic resignation led to Francis' election and a papacy dedicated to showing the merciful side of the church. Some 5,000 extra police, carabinieri and soldiers have been deployed around Rome, and a no-fly zone imposed on its skies, to protect the pilgrims who are flocking to Rome on foot, by car, train and plane to participate in the yearlong celebration. Security was heightened after the Vatican was listed as a possible target following the Paris attacks, but the extra police patrols and traffic stops extended far beyond the immediate vicinity of the Vatican or even the other main pilgrimage sites in Rome.

Francis launched the 12-month jubilee to emphasize what has become the leitmotif of his papacy: showing the merciful and welcoming side of a Catholic Church more often known for moralizing and casting judgment. "How much wrong we do to God and his grace when we speak of sins be-

showing the merciful and welcoming side of a Catholic Church more often known for moralizing and casting judgment.

"We have to absorb the message that God always forgives us, which is the message that the pope

through it is meant to symbolize the pilgrimage of life's journey and the sacrifices endured.

"We have to absorb the message that God always forgives us, which is the message that the pope

applause.

Holy Years are generally celebrated every 25-50 years, and over the centuries they have been used to encourage the faithful to make pilgrimages to Rome to obtain an "indulgence"

the pope made clear from the start that he wanted this Holy Year to be a more sober occasion. For the first time, the pope instructed all cathedrals around the world to open their Holy Doors to pilgrims to encourage the faithful to mark the jubilee at home rather than coming to Rome.

Nevertheless, Italian officials seized on the excuse of the jubilee to allocate millions of euros for dozens of public works projects around the capital, practically none of which has been completed.

Francis announced his Holy Year on the second anniversary of his papacy, saying his aim was "to give comfort to every man and every woman of our time." It was in keeping with his priority to make the church a "field hospital" for injured souls, where the wounded are welcomed and loved, not judged.

The jubilee year will feature a host of special Masses and extra general audiences to accommodate the throngs of pilgrims, while Francis himself has set aside one Friday each month to slip out of the Vatican to perform an act of mercy himself, in private. For all the pomp of Tuesday's ceremony, Francis technically launched the Holy Year of Mercy last week in Central African Republic, when he pushed open the Holy Door of the Bangui cathedral. His aim was to give the conflict-weary Christians there a spiritual boost, and show the universality of his message of mercy.

Elsewhere around the world, Holy Doors will be opening at cathedrals starting this Sunday. □



Pope Francis pushes open the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, formally launching the Holy Year of Mercy, at the Vatican, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015. The 12-month jubilee emphasizes what has become the leitmotif of his papacy: to show the merciful and welcoming side of a Catholic Church more often known for its moralizing and judgment.

(AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

ing punished by his judgment before we speak of their being forgiven by his mercy," Francis told an estimated 50,000 people gathered under rainy skies for his Mass opening the jubilee. "We have to put mercy before judgment, and in any event God's judgment will always be in the light of his mercy."

The Vatican's Holy Door, located to the right of the basilica's main entrance, is decorated with 16 bronze panels depicting the redemption of man's sin through mercy. Passing

gives to us," said Maria Sila, a pilgrim from Buenos Aires as she waited for the Mass to begin.

After Francis and Benedict walked through the doorway, the first throngs of pilgrims followed suit, led off by the Italian president and other dignitaries.

In a sign that Francis himself was taken aback by Benedict's frailty when he saw him at the Holy Door, he asked the throngs of pilgrims in the piazza to send their prayers for his "good health." The crowd responded with cheers and

— the ancient church tradition related to the forgiveness of sins that roughly amounts to a "get out of Purgatory free" card.

Unlike in Martin Luther's time, these Holy Year indulgences are free and available to those who pass through the Holy Door.

The last jubilee was in 2000, when St. John Paul II ushered in the church's third millennium and some 25 million pilgrims flocked to a Rome that had undergone a multimillion-dollar facelift for the occasion.

In typical Francis fashion,

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Experience the oldest Aruban industry as a fun daytime outing: The Aruba Aloe Factory & Museum.

Tourists have been visiting the wonderful island of Aruba since the late 1940's, enjoying the pristine beaches, clear waters and Aruba's dynamic nightlife. But one of the most unique experiences you, and your skin, will certainly appreciate for years to come, is visiting the world famous Aruba Aloe Balm Plantation, Factory and Museum. You will learn about the rich history of Aloe Vera, its importance to Aruba's economy, and the healing properties of this miracle plant.

The Aloe Vera Plant, a brief history.



Aloe Vera's healing properties were discovered centuries ago and it has been used as an ingredient in medications throughout the world by many different cultures ever since. The plant was introduced in Aruba in the mid 1800's, and because of the perfect weather conditions for the plant to grow in; Aruba became one of the largest exporters of Aloe Vera products in the world earning the nickname "Island of Aloe". Aloe has proven to be so important to the local economy that the plant is even shown in the code of arms of Aruba. Aloe Vera nowadays tops the list as one of the most powerful moisturizers and hydrating remedies available and Aruban aloe is known to be the best in the world.

The Aruba Aloe Balm Factory and Museum Tour:

Founded in 1890, Aruba Aloe Balm is one of the oldest companies in Aruba and the only company that still grows and processes Aloe on the island. By visiting this iconic landmark and plantation, you will learn about the plant's rich history and about how Aruba Aloe makes its world famous skin care products.

During the tour, the super friendly local staff will guide you through the process of how they grow, hand cut and process the products that are sold worldwide. You will also get a guided tour of the museum that serves as a national depository for ancient aloe tools and equipment as well as a complete library on the history, manufacturing and healing qualities of Aloe.

Laura & Dominio Bucciero, from Napels Italy on their honeymoon:

"First time in Aruba, we are here for our honeymoon and staying for a week. The tour is very interesting, even though I don't perfectly understand English. We have Aloe in Italy but there it's not such good quality as the Aloe here. I have purchased the hand and body lotion because I don't really sunburn but still want very smooth and hydrated skin." If you want to experience this unique and authentic experience come visit us during your stay here on Aruba! The FREE tour & museum are open **Monday thru Friday from 8 am. to 5 pm. and Saturday from 9 am. – 5 pm.** If you are interested in learning more about Aruba Aloe products you can also visit www.arubaaloe.com. We hope to see you soon!

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Venezuela's poor rejected socialists, now fear economic pain



In this Dec. 6, 2015 photo, the emblematic 23 De Enero apartment complex is covered with a banner that reads in Spanish "Vote for PSUV, we're those of Chavez" during congressional elections in Caracas, Venezuela. The district patrolled by pro-government motorcycle gangs turned against the socialist party for the first time Sunday, part of a tide of voters who punished the government for the country's collapsing economy and handed the opposition a landslide victory in legislative elections. (AP Photo/Alejandro Cegarra)

HANNAH DREIER
Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Residents of the slum where Hugo Chavez's final remains rest are expecting deeper economic pain after they helped a majority of the nation's voters deliver a landslide for the opposition against the socialist party founded by the late

president. Even if the new legislature elected Sunday devotes itself to righting the economy, things in this neighborhood could soon get worse before they get better. The same price and currency controls that have turned daily life into a scavenger hunt for food and medicine also shield the poor

from the country's triple-digit inflation. "It's very difficult to remove economic controls. Even if you do everything right, you might end up hurting a lot of poor people in the short term," said political science professor Javier Corrales of Amherst College in Massachusetts. Around the 23 of January

neighborhood, murals of Chavez in various iterations peer down from the neighborhood's walls: Chavez the stone-faced general. Chavez the child destined for greatness. Older Chavez relaxing in a hammock. Younger Chavez plotting a 1992 coup attempt in this very slum. Jhon Ramirez worries less about betraying the man whose face greets him at every turn than whether there will be food to buy in January, always a time of intense shortages here as factories furlough workers for long holiday vacations. "We're all pretty nervous. We need someone who can fill the shelves again," he said. "We're just hoping the new politicians don't turn out to be like the ones we have now—stubborn and out for their own gain." The district patrolled by pro-government motorcycle gangs turned against the socialist party for the first time Sunday, part of a tide of voters who punished the government for the country's collapsing economy and handed the opposition a landslide victory in legislative elections. The atmosphere changed overnight.

On Election Day, many in the neighborhood stood in their doorway with a cup of rum. Grinning young people danced to reggaeton and wagged their indelible ink-stained pinkie fingers in the air, proclaiming that they had voted for change.

The socialists lost by less than a single percentage point here Sunday. They won the district by a margin of almost 2 to 1 during the last legislative elections, in 2010.

On Monday, doors were shut, stores were closed, and pro-government paramilitary groups kept watch over public spaces in this slum named for the date of the end of Venezuela's last military dictatorship.

Armed Chavez loyalists still police the area. One of them ordered an Associated Press reporter to leave on Tuesday, saying the neighborhood is a "bourgeoisie-free zone."

The coalition of parties that ran against the government has promised to free jailed opposition leaders, but has offered few economic proposals. The economy currently suffers from sliding reserves, heavy government pre-election spending and choked revenue from a plunge in oil prices that account for 95 percent of exports.

Some slum dwellers, such as a woman selling fresh fish in the narrow stone streets, worry that the opposition will ignore the economy and focus on tearing down the socialist administration.

President Nicolas Maduro is capitalizing on those fears. "The opposition has no political project," he said in a television address Monday night. "They only have one objective: Destroy the revolution by any means." □

Haiti presidential candidate Moise stands by results

DAVID McFADDEN
Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — The banana exporter who is the leading candidate in the disputed first round of Haiti's presidential vote said this week that critics aren't providing evidence to back up their allegations of "massive fraud." Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council says Jovenel Moise received 33 percent of the Oct. 25 vote to clear the

packed field of 54 presidential candidates. Contested officials results have the government-backed candidate with 117,602 more votes than second-place finisher Jude Celestin, a former state construction chief. The disputed results have brought a renewed surge of paralyzing street protests and so many broad accusations of electoral fraud from civil society and opposition groups it is

not clear whether a Dec. 27 presidential runoff between the top two finishers can take place as scheduled. At a press conference, Moise asserted that Haiti's National Human Rights Defense Network and other organizations have been making baseless accusations of widespread fraud including ballot-box stuffing and political-party representatives voting multiple times. He said there

were various problems with the first round and he has made recommendations to the much-criticized Provisional Electoral Council, "but you can't discredit the whole process." "The Haitian people voted for me and they put me in the first position," said Moise, an agricultural businessman who was plucked from political obscurity by outgoing President Michel Martelly to be his successor. □



More a brand than a souvenir....

Meet the local guys behind Aruba Rocks!



ORANJESTAD - Aruban designer Calvin Maduro and branding expert Jaymir Janga launched a must-have product line of shirts, caps, tumblers and stickers named Aruba Rocks!

Calvin explains "We wanted to differentiate ourselves from other merchandise on the market by presenting a changing design concept with local motif that visitors could en-



joy every vacation" Their cool designs launched in April of 2013 depict the shoco (burrowing owl, Aruba's national bird) donkey, pelican, marlin and goat in a whimsical colorful manner. All animals sport colorful Ray-ban-style shades and a mohawk hairstyle. Since Aruba is known to be the Caribbean destination with the highest return guest rate, fresh designs of the multi colored, crackled prints are continuously introduced creating a dynamic product line for our rocking friends.

According to Jaymir, "Our



aspiration is to combine locally branded products with a worthy cause that will benefit the entire community. In order to aid in reducing trash and marine debris, we started selling Aruba Rocks reusable and recyclable tumblers to many resorts and beach bars particularly for beachgoers, to reduce waste from disposable plastic and styrofoam cups."

Aruba Rocks recently opened their first official



store in Paseo Herencia mall where all their

designed items are displayed. When you buy an Aruba Rocks product you help protect Aruba's valuable natural resources and maintain the attractiveness of Aruba's beaches. This will allow all who consider Aruba their home-away-from-home to contribute to the protection of the island's environment in a really effortless manner. Aruba Rocks have found a way to express their passion for their island and design while contributing to the protection of the island's environment.

For more information you can follow them on Facebook.com/arubarocks365 and on Instagram @arubarocks365



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You Can Eat Steak night. Here's what recent visitors have to say on TripAdvisor about Barney's Bar & Restaurant:

--"This restaurant was rec-

ommended by fellow beach goers and we were glad they told us about it. We wound up going there 3 times in 2 weeks! We had the fish on 2 occasions and ribs the other. We sat out-



side twice the place was so busy.

Make a reservation, since the people were just pouring in. Nightly specials more in a serving than you could eat. Everything was very good and highly recommend. Also, there is entertainment - we enjoyed hearing it when we were inside but we couldn't hear outside. Very friendly and

Springs MD.

--"They have many different theme nights, loved the Schnitzel night and my wife loved the all you can eat Ribs night. Ask for Ilse as your server, she is great!-- Reviewed Golderd.

Walk-ins are welcomed if seats are available but it really is necessary now-a-



efficient staff and highly recommend for an evening out." --Reviewed by Myrish, Chicago IL.

--"Easily reached from the high rise area, this was a neat restaurant with a definite Dutch flavor. Nightly specials and wide variety on the menu." --Reviewed by Swimmersmom14, Silver

days to make a reservation to insure you have a table. You can contact your concierge desk at your hotel/time share or call them directly at 586-5420. Feel free to check them out on Facebook at Barneys Restaurant to see what's going on. So, what are you waiting for? MAKE THAT RESERVATION TODAY!!!!☐

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Manchebo Awarded Top 10 Hotel in the World by Thomas Cook Sweden

EAGLE BEACH - The luxury Caribbean boutique resort Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa has recently won the award for being one of the Top 10 Hotels in the World. The award was given by valued Aruba partner Thomas Cook Sweden, who completed a survey amongst their clients and travelers. Scoring as high as 4.9 out of 5 points, the intimate resort established the number 3 position of best hotels in the world chosen out of 1000+ hotels worldwide. The award was given to the resort's General Manager Edgar Roelofs and Carla van Loenen Sales & Marketing Manager by Senior Contract Managers Goran Cosic and Rune Kristensen of Thomas Cook - Ving. "The high level of service and peaceful serenity are one of the many reasons our clients appreciate Manchebo so much", according to Mr. Kristensen.

As a token of appreciation the management team presented the award to the complete Manchebo staff during the 'Retirement Party' of Assistant General Manager Rita van Volvelde. "Our boutique resort underwent many great rejuvenations over the past years," said Edgar Roelofs, General Manager of the property. "This award is a wonderful recognition by Thomas Cook and we feel honored to receive this prestige award from our valued partner, we will continue offering the best service and quality to our guests from all over the world."



Thomas Cook Sweden features a popular Aruba program from the Nordic countries with bi-weekly non-stop service from Stockholm, Sweden to Aruba during the months of October through March with Thomas Cook Airlines. In addition they offer a year-round program with

KLM via Amsterdam.

The Vision & Mission of the resort for 2016 and beyond is to make the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa a leading independent luxury boutique resort in the Caribbean. By continuously striving to achieve higher customer & employee satisfaction, improved opera-

tional effectiveness, sustainable & green initiatives, unique product improvements and increased occupancies. Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa is located along Aruba's widest stretch of beach and renowned Eagle Beach on Aruba. The ultimate Caribbean vacation experience begins at this intimate, 2-story boutique resort an ideal place for romantic and rejuvenating getaways. The 72 Deluxe Ocean and Garden View Rooms are newly renovated in an inviting, contemporary Island décor and feature top-notch amenities to make your stay relaxing and enjoyable. The resort also features a complete wellness program including Spa del Sol and daily yoga and Pilates classes. □

Chanukah Menorah Lighting Event Held on Eagle Beach



EAGLE BEACH - The first public Chanukah menorah lighting was held on Eagle beach on Monday evening. This was a beautiful event with many in attendance. It was organized by Rabbi Ahron and Chaya Blasberg of Chabad



Lubavitch Aruba and hosted by La Cabana Beach Resort on the beach across the road from the resort. This coming Sunday, December 13th, the 'LET IT GLOW!' Grand Chanukah Party will take place at the Playa Linda Plaza in Palm Beach. The event will feature Latkes, Donuts, Chocolate gelt, Entertainment, Balloons, Photo booth, Arts-n-Crafts, Donut decorating, Cotton Candy, Popcorn, Hotdogs & Burgers, Live Music, and Free Chanukah gift for every child! The event begins at 6pm at the Playa Linda Plaza, J.E. Irausquin Blvd. 87 Noord, Aruba. For more information and the schedule of Chanukah events, visit: www.JewishAruba.com/Chanukah2015. □



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Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo breaks through the Malmo defense during a Champions League group A soccer match between Real Madrid and Malmo at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015.

(AP Photo/Francisco Seco)

Champions League Roundup:

As Ronaldo Breaks Scoring Record, Man United Eliminated

ANDREW DAMPF
AP Sports Writer

Perhaps Cristiano Ronaldo wasn't aware that Real Madrid's match against Malmo was mostly meaningless. More likely, he just didn't care — especially with a record in reach. Whatever the case, Ronaldo scored four goals and set up two others Tuesday as Madrid routed Malmo 8-0, making him the first player with 10 goals or more in the group stage of the Champions League.

The Portuguese striker reached 11 goals in six games, surpassing the nine scored by Luiz Adriano with Shakhtar Donetsk last season. Ronaldo also scored nine times in the 2013-14 season group stage. Madrid had already secured first place in Group A, but the convincing victory helped ease the pressure on coach Rafa Benitez and club president Florentino Perez. Meanwhile, Ronaldo's former club Manchester United was relegated to

the Europa League after getting beat 3-2 by Wolfsburg, as the German side advanced to the round of 16 for the first time. The loss, coupled with PSV Eindhoven's 2-1 home victory over CSKA Moscow, dropped United to third place in Group B. Wolfsburg won the group and PSV also advanced. Atletico Madrid won Group C by beating Benfica 2-1 to leapfrog the Portuguese host, which took second. In Group D, Manchester City scored three late goals in a

five-minute span to beat Borussia Moenchengladbach 4-2 and finish top for the first time. Juventus, last season's runner-up, wasted a chance to finish first with a 1-0 loss at Sevilla, although still advanced. The other four groups wrap up play Wednesday. Here is a group-by-group look at Tuesday's matches:

GROUP A

Ronaldo's exploits overshadowed a hat trick by Karim Benzema at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

It was the second straight game in which Benzema scored at least two goals after a brace in the team's 4-1 win over Getafe in the Spanish league on Saturday. Those were his first goals since being implicated in a blackmail case in relation to an alleged extortion scam over a sex tape featuring his French national teammate Mathieu Valbuena. Mateo Kovacic also scored for Madrid.

Continued on page 18

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Champions League Roundup:

Continued from page 17

Also, Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Lucas set each other up for goals as Paris Saint-Germain beat Shakhtar Donetsk 2-0.

PSG was already guaranteed to finish second behind Madrid.

Madrid advanced with 16 points and PSG with 13. Shakhtar finished third with three points and dropped into the Europa League while Malmo came last, also with three points but with only one goal scored and 21 conceded.

GROUP B

Central defender Naldo scored a brace as Wolfsburg advanced to the knockout stage for the first time when it beat three-

time winner Manchester United 3-2. United dropped to third place in the group when PSV Eindhoven came from behind to beat CSKA Moscow 2-1 and join Wolfsburg in the round of 16.

Wolfsburg won the group with 12 points and PSV finished with 10, two more than United, which will now have to play in the Europa League. CSKA finished last with four points.

PSV advanced for the first time since 2006. Veteran defender Sergei Ignashevich converted a 76th-minute penalty to give CSKA the lead, but PSV captain Luuk de Jong equalized just two minutes later, and midfielder Davy Propper's low shot sealed the win in the 86th.



Sevilla's Fernando Llorente, left, is airborne with Juventus' Giorgio Chiellini during the Champions League Group D soccer match between Sevilla and Juventus, Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan stadium in Seville, Spain, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015.

(AP Photo/Miguel Angel Morenatti)

In Wolfsburg, Anthony Martial put United ahead

in the 10th, but Naldo volleyed in the equalizer in the 14th. Vieirinha regained the lead for Wolfsburg in the 29th, before an own goal by Joshua Guilavogui in the 82nd tied the score. But two minutes later Naldo scored his second with a header to seal Wolfsburg's victory.

GROUP C

Luciano Vietto scored one goal and set up another as Atletico Madrid won 2-1 at Benfica to win the group. Playing at the same stadium where it lost the 2014 final, Diego Simeone's side avenged a 2-1 loss to Benfica from earlier this season. Vietto passed for midfielder Saul Niguez to convert Atletico's aggressive start into a goal after half an hour, before he added a strike of his own early in the second half.

Benfica substitute Kostas Mitroglou halved the difference in the 75th. Galatasaray was held to 1-1 at home by Astana in the other Group C match. The Turkish side finished

third and will join the Europa League.

Atletico finished with 13 points, Benfica with 10, Galatasaray with five and Astana with four.

GROUP D

Raheem Sterling netted in the 80th and 81st minutes and Wilfried Bony scored in the 85th to spark Manchester City's late turnaround in a 4-2 win over Borussia Muenchengladbach. To qualify in first place, City also needed Juventus to lose in Sevilla and last season's runner-up was beaten 1-0.

Sevilla secured a berth in the Europa League as Fernando Llorente scored against his former team.

On the two previous occasions City reached the knockout stage, it was runner-up in the group and drew Barcelona both times. The English club is likely to get an easier draw in the last 16 this time.

City finished with 12 points, Juventus with 11, Sevilla with six and Gladbach with five. □

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UFC putting big shows on for 3 straight nights this weekend



This photo shows Conor McGregor, left, kicking at Dustin Poirier, during their fight in Las Vegas. The UFC is surging toward the end of the year by flexing its promotional muscles for three straight nights in Vegas. McGregor's featherweight title showdown with champion Jose Aldo is only the culmination of a three-day fight extravaganza this weekend.

(AP Photo/John Locher, File)

GREG BEACHAM
AP Sports Writer

The UFC is surging toward the new year by flexing its promotional muscles for three straight nights in Vegas.

Conor McGregor's featherweight title showdown with champion Jose Aldo on Saturday night is the culmination of a three-day fight extravaganza this weekend. The UFC is staging back-to-back-to-back shows on the Las Vegas Strip, loading its stacked deck with intriguing matchups between former champions and rising stars. "It's going to be a historic time for me, but also for the entire UFC," McGregor said. "You've never seen a weekend like this."

In its 22-year history, the UFC has never crammed three major fight cards so closely together, never mind in the same city. The promotion is putting on at least 33 fights in those three days, including two title bouts and its first headlining non-title women's bout. After receiving criticism for occasionally thin shows while expanding its promotional breadth in recent years, the UFC made sure plenty of attention will be on mixed martial arts dur-

ing this weekend gap between the college football regular season and holiday festivities.

"It's literally the best December we've ever had in the company's history," UFC President Dana White said when announcing the lineup. "We started looking at the end of the year. A lot of people needed fights, so we said, 'Let's do three in a row. We'll do Thursday, Friday and Saturday.' It's a killer weekend in Vegas, right before Christmas."

The UFC 194 pay-per-view card is headlined by interim champion McGregor's long-anticipated meeting with Aldo, the imperious Brazilian champion who has been subjected to months of expert verbal abuse from his Irish challenger.

And that show at the MGM Grand Garden Arena actually features two title fights: Middleweight champion Chris Weidman also defends his belt against Luke Rockhold in a tantalizing style clash pitting two dominant 185-pounders at the peak of their careers.

Weidman and Rockhold could headline a major show on their own, but the promotion wants to guarantee another big pay-

per-view buy for UFC 194 after Ronda Rousey's stunning loss to Holly Holm last month at UFC 193, which became one of the biggest money-makers in the company's history.

The pay-per-view portion of the UFC 194 card is so stacked that popular veteran Urijah Faber is consigned to fighting Frankie Saenz on the preliminary card.

One night earlier at the Cosmopolitan hotel, featherweight veterans Frankie Edgar and Chad Mendes will meet on Fox Sports 1 in

the compelling main event of a card also featuring the final bout in this season of "The Ultimate Fighter," the UFC's long-running reality show. Edgar or Mendes, who lost to McGregor as a late replacement for Aldo in August, could be the next challenger for the undisputed belt.

The UFC's weekend festivities start off Thursday night at the Cosmopolitan with a card headlined by a 115-pound showdown between Paige VanZant and Rose Namajunas, two of the strawweight division's

most promising prospects. The bout is the first non-title fight main event between two women for the UFC, which only began promoting women's MMA in 2013. The UFC has heavily promoted the 21-year-old VanZant as a future star, and this is her first headlining bout. The Thursday card, which can be viewed only on the UFC's Fight Pass subscription digital network, also features unbeaten 19-year-old lightweight Sage Northcutt, another prospect ticketed for fame and stardom by the UFC. □

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His back ailing, Woods is merely an onlooker _ for now

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

NASSAU, Bahamas (AP) —

Jordan Spieth is used to having an audience on the golf course.

Just not Tiger Woods.

Spieth had just made bogey from the sand on the par-3 fifth hole at Albany Golf Club when he heard from the other side of the ropes, "Don't worry. You'll get it back." It was hard to ignore because no more than a dozen people were following him at the Hero World Challenge. What startled him was recognizing the voice and looking over to see Woods watching him and Bill Haas from a golf cart during the third round. "If you had told me four years ago when I was still in college that Tiger would be sitting in a cart watching me play ... I mean, that was weird," Spieth said. A moment later, Spieth added what so many other players are saying, or at least thinking. "We need him back out here playing."

He can only watch at the moment, and there is no indication when that might

change. Woods used to speak without giving much information. Now he has no

a great career no matter what happens the rest of the way. The public and

week. Woods mingled during a Thursday night party called "India Night," sharing laughs and stories. Different about this night is that after about 10 minutes of standing, he quietly retreated to a bench to carry on the conversation while sitting. And when he got back up, Woods arched his back in a long, slow motion.

So yes, this will be a tedious recovery — if it ever gets started. And in the meantime, there will be a void to fill for those yearning for answers. Will he ever win again? Will he ever play again? And the way he reflected on his career, does he even care if he plays again? "He was, it seemed to me, invincible for the longest time," Haas said. "And I would say he was so that way that I wouldn't put it past him to come back and be extremely good again. I don't know that he'll ever be where he was because he was so far ahead of everyone else. But he may be No. 1 again. It wouldn't shock anyone, I don't think."

The most fun Woods had all year on the golf course was the Wyndham Championship, where he was two shots behind going into the final round. He closed with a 70, wound up four shots back and tied for 10th.

If or when his health improves, that could be a seminal moment.

Woods brought out record crowds in Greensboro, North Carolina, and it served two purposes — what he did for the tournament, and what the tour-

nament did for him. It was a wholesome reminder of his stardom, and it was needed after the worst two seasons of his career. And he surely paid attention to the winner, Davis Love III, a 51-year-old who found a way to win after significant surgeries to his ankle and neck.

Woods made it clear that he wants to keep playing, provided his health cooperates.

"I'm far from being done," he said in the broadcast booth during the final round. "But I have to be patient, which I'm not very good at when it comes to that side of it."

The real challenge will be his ability to be honest with the state of his back, his game and the competition.

Woods said 10 years ago in the parking lot at Doral that "I'll definitely quit the game earlier than people think." In today's context, it's eerie. Then again, most golfers approaching the prime of their careers think they will always have more control than they really do. More interesting that day was Woods saying there would be no reason for him to play if his best was not good enough.

But how will he ever know? When do the very best athletes, particularly in a sport like golf, ever think they played their best? It's an endless pursuit until retirement becomes awkward.

That's what Woods will have to figure out when he returns.

If he returns. □



In this August 2015 photo, Tiger Woods reacts after missing a putt at the Wyndham Championship golf tournament in Greensboro, N.C. (AP Photo/Chuck Burton)

information, and it seemed to speak volumes.

He doesn't know when his back, which has had three procedures in the same spot over 18 months, will get better. He doesn't know when he can start doing any exercise beyond walking. He doesn't know when he can play.

What was rare about his news conference last Tuesday was his willingness to look back instead of forward. He said it has been

his peers can debate his place in history with 79 wins on the PGA Tour, 14 majors and a combined 13 years at No. 1 in the world. And anything else, Woods said, "will be gravy."

That explains why so many stories read like golfing obituaries. But there was no visible indication from Woods during a week in the Bahamas that this was the end. Subdued in his news conference, he was relaxed the rest of the

Greinke, Diamondbacks finalize \$206.5M deal

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP)

— Zack Greinke and the Arizona Diamondbacks finalized their \$206.5 million, six-year contract on Tuesday, a deal with a \$34.4 million average salary that is the highest in Major League Baseball history.

The Diamondbacks beat out National League West rivals Los Angeles and San Francisco to sign the ma-

jor league ERA leader and runner-up for the NL Cy Young Award, who helped the Dodgers win their third straight division title this year. "Zack fills the frontline starter need we've been exploring for a while," Diamondbacks general manager Dave Stewart said in a statement. "Zack will be a tremendous influence on our young starters."

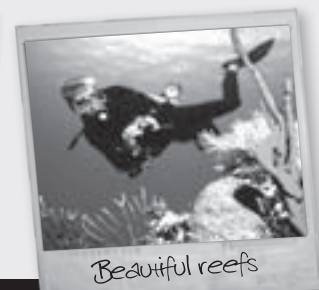
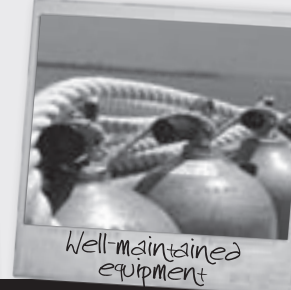
Greinke signed a \$147 million, six-year deal with the Dodgers in December 2012 that included an opt-out clause. He will wind up earning \$282.5 million over nine seasons. His average tops the previous mark of \$31 million set last week when left-hand pitcher David Price agreed to a \$217 million, seven-year contract with Boston. □

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Cowboys top Redskins 19-16 on Bailey's 54-yard field goal

HOWARD FENDRICH
AP Pro Football Writer

LANDOVER, Maryland (AP)

— A fumbled punt return by Washington's DeSean Jackson deep in his own territory led to Dallas' only touchdown and helped the Cowboys to a 19-16 win against the Redskins on Monday, tightening the mediocre NFC East conference.

Washington is tied with Philadelphia and the New York Giants on 5-7 records while the Cowboys are now only a game behind on 4-8 and in the thick of the playoff chase.

With a wild finish capping an otherwise dull game filled with turnovers, punts and penalties, the Cowboys won it through Dan Bailey's 54-yard field goal with 9 seconds left.

After sharing just 18 points

in the first 58 1/2 minutes, the teams combined for 17 in the last 1 1/2.

Dallas scored the game's first TD with 74 seconds remaining to lead 16-9 after recovering Jackson's fumble on an ill-advised return. He caught the ball at the 16-yard line, got past the 20 but then reversed course and ran back to the 1.

As he began a second advance he was surrounded and the ball popped out and was recovered by Dallas punter Chris Jones at the 15 with only 86 seconds left.

After the subsequent touchdown, Washington had time to tie it when Jackson made a 28-yard TD catch, but then Bailey hit the go-ahead kick.

The Cowboys won for the first time this season without Tony Romo at quarterback, and his replacement Matt



Dallas Cowboys kicker Dan Bailey (5) celebrates with his teammates after kicking the game-winning field goal during the second half of an NFL football game against the Washington Redskins in Landover, Md., Monday, Dec. 7, 2015. The Cowboy defeated the Redskins 19-16.

(AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

Cassel — who had been son — led Dallas 20 yards set up Bailey's fourth field goal of the game. □



Boxing champ Fury reported for 'hate crime' to police

MANCHESTER, England (AP) — New world heavyweight champion Tyson Fury is the subject of a police investigation following the outspoken boxer's comments about homosexuality that have been heavily criticized in Britain.

Greater Manchester Police say on

Tuesday they have received a report of a "hate crime" regarding Fury's comments, which were published in a newspaper interview before his victory over Wladimir Klitschko in a heavyweight title fight on Nov. 28. Fury, who is fiercely religious, said that among the things that need to hap-

pen "before the devil comes home ... is homosexuality being legal in countries." Such is the consternation in Britain about the remarks that more than 100,000 people have signed a petition calling for Fury to be removed from the shortlist for the BBC's sports personality of the year award. □

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Tech Talk:

Apple Maps, once a laughingstock, now dominates iPhones

ANICK JESDANUN
AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Apple Maps quickly became the butt of jokes when it debuted in 2012. It overlooked many towns and businesses and misplaced famous landmarks. It marked New York's Madison Square Garden arena as park space because of the word "Garden." The service was a rare blunder for a company known for simple, easy-to-use products. It's a different story three years later.

Apple fixed errors as users submitted them. It quietly bought several mapping companies, mostly for their engineers and other talent. This fall, it added transit directions for several major cities, narrowing a major gap with Google. Apple Maps is now used more widely than Google Maps on iPhones.

"They really did a great job in a short amount of time," said Alex Mackenzie-Torres, a former Google Maps manager who's now with competing transit app Moovit. "Apple has something that few companies have — simplicity in design mixed with high doses of pragmatism and practicality."

Apple's significant investment in fixing Maps underscores how important maps and related services are to tech companies. Location is key to helping phone users find restaurants and shops, discover things to do and just get around. It's also big business, as app makers tap into the core mapping functions of phones to direct people in helpful ways and sometimes offer them bargains based on where they're standing.

The quick turnaround also

demonstrates how easily companies like Apple can steer people to their own services. Google Maps and various third-party apps offer many features that Apple Maps lacks, yet Apple

on iPhones and iPads, with more than 5 billion map-related requests each week. Research firm comScore says Apple has a modest lead over Google on iPhones in the U.S., though

navigation with automatic rerouting, a feature Google offered only on Android. Apple built its own service from scratch and knocked Google Maps off the iPhone's home screen.

would "keep working non-stop" to deliver the best experience possible. Without much fanfare, the service gradually improved.

"We are fast learners and we are fast at fixing things," said Greg "Joz" Joswiak, an Apple vice president who oversees product marketing for iPhones and related services. "We learned the maps business incredibly fast."

Apple now gets data from more than 3,000 sources for business listings, traffic and other information. In adding transit, Apple sent teams to map out subway entrances and signs. That results in more precise walking directions, as stations can stretch for blocks and the center point used by some services isn't necessarily the closest. Apple also started sending out vehicles with sensors to map roads, similar to Google's longstanding practice.

By making Maps a core iPhone feature, Apple made it easier for outside developers to include mapping features in their apps. When you go to Yelp, you can find directions to a business with one tap. When you go to the Starbucks app, you can see all the nearby stores.

On the flip side, the iPhone's Siri voice assistant leads direction requests straight to Apple Maps, as does tapping on an address in Mail and other apps. With that integration, users like Ostropowicz no longer hesitate. The default behavior isn't just a competitive advantage for Apple; it's a convenience for many users. But default settings mean nothing if the experience isn't good — as it most definitely wasn't three years ago. □



The Apple Maps app is displayed on an Apple Watch during an event in San Francisco. Apple Maps quickly became the butt of jokes when it debuted in 2012. After Apple fixed errors as users submitted them, Apple Maps is now used more widely than Google Maps on iPhones.

(AP Photo/Eric Risberg)

cleverly turned user inertia to its advantage. Many people use Apple Maps just because it comes with the phone. Even if you've taken the trouble to download a competing app, other iPhone services such as Siri and Mail will invariably take you to Apple Maps. Without the ability to steer users this way, Apple "would not be in the position they are in," IDC analyst John Jackson said. "Not that they aren't improving the experience, but this helps the cause."

Apple says its mapping service is now used more than three times as often as its next leading competitor

comScore measures how many people use a service in a given month rather than how often.

Google still dominates among all U.S. smartphones, though, in part because Apple Maps isn't available on Google's Android system, which is more prevalent than iPhones. In October, Google Maps had more than twice as many smartphone users as Apple Maps. Much like Apple, Google benefits as the default on Android.

For years, Google provided the default mapping service on iPhones. That changed as more people relied on turn-by-turn voice

Google's initial forays into voice navigation in 2009 had problems, too, including directing motorists to left turns at no-turn intersections. But by 2012, Google Maps had improved significantly. By then, more people knew how a mapping service ought to work — and Apple's new offering fell short.

"I heard so many different horror stories that I was almost hesitant to try it," said Rick Ostropowicz, an iPhone owner in Catonsville, Maryland. "I remember once, it was taking me on a road that no longer existed." CEO Tim Cook apologized and promised that Apple

China weakness sinks materials stocks; oil falls

BERNARD CONDON

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks fell for a second day on Tuesday following a wave of selling abroad on fears that a slump in commodity prices was far from over.

The selling began in Asia on disappointing trade figures from China, then spread to Europe where stock indexes in Germany, France and Britain each dropped

lier.

The S&P 500 gave up 13.48 points, or 0.7 percent, to 2,063.59. The Nasdaq composite slipped 3.6 points, or 0.1 percent, to 5,098.24.

In Asia, Chinese customs data showed exports from the world's second-largest economy contracted 6.8 percent in November, worse than October's 3.6 percent fall. Imports dropped 8.7 percent.

Mining stocks in particular

\$2.05 a pound. It is down 29 percent this year.

Among other stocks making big moves:

— Outerwall plunged \$14.02, or 24 percent, to \$44.04 after lowering its earnings forecast and announcing that the head of its movie-kiosk division, Redbox, was leaving as rentals fall.

— Chipotle Mexican Grill fell \$9.51, or 1.7 percent, to \$542.24 on reports that



Traders Fred DeMarco, left, and Greg Mulligan work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. U.S. stocks fell for a second day on Tuesday following a wave of selling abroad on fears that a slump in commodity prices was far from over.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

more than 1 percent. In the U.S., stocks fell sharply in the morning, but later made back much of the losses. Still, the selling was broad, with nine of the 10 sectors of the Standard and Poor's 500 index closing down. Suppliers of raw materials fell the most, down 1.9 percent. Energy companies dropped 1.5 percent.

A big focus for investors — oil — slid again. After dropping for 1 1/2 years, U.S. benchmark crude costs just \$37.51 a barrel, near a seven-year low.

"The energy sector has done a good job grappling with mid-\$40 oil, but it's tougher as you go under \$40," said Doug Cote, chief market strategist at Voya Investment Management. "The energy sector is having trouble adapting."

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 162.51 points, or 0.9 percent, to 17,568. It was down 245 points ear-

were slammed because China is a major importer of raw materials, accounting for as much as 50 percent of global demand, according to consultants PwC. Freeport-McMoRan slumped 49 cents, or 7 percent, to \$6.74. It's down 71 percent this year.

John Manley, chief stock strategist at Wells Fargo Funds, said raw material suppliers ramped up production too much a few years ago as China stoked its economy after the global financial crisis.

"It surprised producers that China was soaking up so much," Manley said. "As China slows, and shifts to more consumer growth, these producers have been hit."

Iron ore, off 43 percent since the start of 2015, fell again Tuesday, shedding 15 cents to close at \$39.25 a metric ton. Copper inched up less than a penny to

80 Boston College students were sickened after eating at one of the company's restaurants. The stock is down 21 percent so far in 2015 as the food chain struggles with the fallout from an E. coli outbreak linked to its restaurants. The company said it believes the Boston College cases are due to the norovirus, not E. coli.

— Norfolk Southern fell \$5.20, or 5.7 percent, to \$86.32 after rejecting Canadian Pacific's latest takeover offer. Norfolk Southern has said it doubts regulators would approve the merger anyway. Canadian Pacific fell \$4.35, or 3.3 percent, to \$126.13.

U.S. government bond prices were flat. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note held steady at 2.23 percent. The euro edged up to \$1.0897 from \$1.0843 late Monday. The dollar fell to 123.02 yen from 123.33 yen. □

Mining sector in turmoil; Anglo American shedding 85,000 jobs

DANICA KIRKA

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The decision by a London-based mining company to shed 85,000 jobs is the sign of a global industry in crisis, with conglomerates reassessing their huge operations to cope with a drop in demand from Chinese factories for metals and other raw materials. Anglo American said Tuesday it will shed some 63 percent of its workforce in a radical restructuring meant to cope with tumbling commodity prices. It will streamline its global business from some 55 mines to around 20.

CEO Mark Cutifani said the drop in commodity prices requires "bolder action," even though the company has delivered on performance and previous business restructuring objectives. He pledged to provide more details later.

The dividend was suspended for the second half of 2015 and 2016. Investors reacted with dismay. The company's share price fell 11 percent to 327.30 pence. Mining companies around the world are facing tough times as economic growth slows in China, whose manufacturers' need for raw materials has driven a years-long boom in mining in countries like Australia and Brazil.

China accounts for as much as 40 percent to 50 percent of global commodity demand, according to consultants PwC. Its economic growth is forecast to drop below 7 percent a year from double digits in recent years — and commodity prices are tracking it lower.

"Mining companies are feeling the wrath of the collapse in commodity prices," said Gianna Bern, who teaches finance at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana and expects others across the industry to also either cut or suspend their dividends to cope. "Companies are weathering some very tough economic times."

The price of copper has dropped about 30 percent in the past year; gold 11 percent; iron ore has about halved. Companies have focused on cutting costs and reducing capital spending, but market values have continued to decline among the top 40 companies — losing some \$156 billion or 16 percent of their combined market value in 2014, PwC said.

"With few exceptions, the commodity price outlook remains dim, forcing miners to keep up their guard," PwC said in its report. "As the old saying goes, survival will be of the fittest, and for miners also the leanest."

Just as first there was a big boom in commodities, now there's an equally big bust, said Julian Jessop, the chief global economist at Capital Economics.

"I think the pendulum has swung too far to pessimism but as long as you have pessimism, you're going to get these big cuts."

Anglo American is not alone. Shares in Glencore slid about 30 percent in one day in September amid concerns over its ability to service sky-high debts at a time of low market prices. Glencore shares have since stabilized as the company announced the sale of several mines, but they were down another 9 percent on Tuesday. Rival BHP Billiton fell 6 percent and Antofagasta 5 percent.

But Anglo American is different from others in that two commodities in its portfolio — diamonds and platinum — are labor intensive to extract, said Kieron Hodgson, a mining analyst at Panmure Gordon & Co. The company said it provides some 40 percent of the world's newly mined platinum from South Africa and Zimbabwe. □

Chipotle shares fall amid new E. coli scare, sales issues

NEW YORK (AP) — Chipotle's stock edged lower in midday trading Tuesday as the Mexican food chain continues to deal with fallout from an E. coli outbreak and contends with weakening sales.

A national outbreak of E. coli has been linked to Denver-based Chipotle, which has said that it is adopting stricter food

safety standards. On Monday 30 Boston College students, including at least eight members of the men's basketball team, complained of gastrointestinal symptoms after eating at a Chipotle restaurant.

On Tuesday, Boston College raised its estimate to 80.

Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc. closed the restaurant in

Boston's Cleveland Circle and said it thinks the illnesses are the result of an isolated incident of norovirus, not a multi-state outbreak of E. coli linked to its restaurants. That outbreak has sickened 52 people in nine states, with the most recent illness starting on November 13.

The university says all students who reported symp-

toms have been tested for both E. Coli and norovirus, and that results will not be available for at least two days. Aside from the E. coli troubles, Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc. has been experiencing a slowdown in its sales. Chipotle executives previously said that the chain's same-store sales growth would be more modest this year, as it's up

against a tough year-ago comparison. The company is also raising prices to consumers to offset the higher cost of beef.

Shares of Chipotle fell \$8.75, or 1.6 percent, to \$543 in afternoon trading Tuesday. Its shares have fallen about 28 percent from their all-time high of \$758.61 achieved in August. □

FAA approval near, Honda's business jet about to hit market

EMERY P. DALESIO
AP Business Writer

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Nearly 30 years after Honda's founder started developing the product and after more than a dozen years of testing, the company best known for its cars and motorcycles is about to start delivering its first aircraft. The Japan-based company this week is expected to receive a crucial Federal Aviation Administration certification of its first HondaJet, the last step before launching full production from its manufacturing hub and headquarters in Greensboro, North Carolina, where it employs more than 1,000. A company announcement is expected Wednesday.

The business jet, which can seat up to seven and lists for about \$4.5 million, will be reaching customers at least five years behind schedule. Honda says it has received more than 100 orders, primarily from customers in North America and Europe.

Michael Whalen, a hospitality industry executive, says he placed a deposit for a HondaJet in 2007 to

replace his slower, propeller-driven King Air. Whalen is founder and CEO of a company that runs hotels and restaurants in a half dozen Midwestern states from Moline, Illinois, a city with few direct flights. Now his Heart of America Group is expanding into Wyoming, Colorado and Texas. "In the last year or so it certainly would have been coming in handy, so I've been inquiring quite regularly as to when they thought it was coming," said Whalen, who now expects delivery in March.

HondaJet's model HA-420 is expected to be the first in a line of Honda aircraft. That could make the quality-conscious, price-competitive company a player in aviation since "anywhere Honda gets into, they tend to grab a significant market share fairly quickly," said Wayne Plucker, who heads aerospace industry research at the consulting firm Frost & Sullivan. Honda touts its plane as lighter, faster and more fuel-efficient than competitors that include U.S.-based Cessna and Embraer of Brazil.

Just as Honda did when it introduced its cars into North America decades ago, its aircraft subsidiary

vies, who covers the business aviation industry for the London-based online publication Corporate Jet

be small-cabin aircraft like the HondaJet, and about 60 percent of the demand in the next five years will



The HondaJet arrives at Tokyo's Haneda airport. Nearly 30 years after development began, and after more than a dozen years of testing, Honda, a company best known for its cars and motorcycles, is about to start delivering its first aircraft: a HondaJet.

(AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

has stayed low-key, careful and methodical for an industry that tends toward hoopla and splashy sales announcements at air shows, Plucker said.

The HondaJet reaches the market after sales of similar light jets have struggled to rebound from the global financial crisis, Alud Da-

Investor, wrote in an email. Up to 9,200 new business jets worth \$270 billion will be delivered worldwide in the next decade, according to Honeywell International, which produces aerospace components and an annual industry forecast. About a quarter of those sales will

be in North America, the report said. Entering the aviation market was a goal of founder Soichiro Honda, and HondaJet's development began several years before his death in 1991. Honda sent engineer Michimasa Fujino to the United States to design an experimental aircraft. □

Regulators move to stop Staples' deal with Office Depot

NEW YORK (AP) — The Federal Trade Commission said this week that it is seeking to block the proposed combination of Staples and Office Depot because the deal would reduce competition in the office supplies market. The companies said they plan to fight to preserve the deal.

Shares of the two office supply retailers fell sharply.

The FTC said corporations rely on Staples and Office Depot to buy pens, paper clips and other supplies at low prices. A deal between Staples and Office Depot would cut competition and lead to higher

prices, the FTC said. The decision comes 10 months after Staples offered to buy rival Office Depot for \$6.3 billion.

Staples and Office Depot said they plan to show that the FTC's decision is based on "a flawed analysis and misunderstanding" of the competitive land-

scape the companies deal with.

The pair argue that competition has become even tougher since Office Depot and OfficeMax merged in 2013 and that the FTC is contradicting itself because it said that the office supply market was highly competitive

two years ago.

Office Depot Chairman and CEO Roland Smith said Staples and Office Depot plan to pursue legal options in order to complete the deal.

Staples is based in Framingham, Massachusetts, while Office Depot is based in Boca Raton, Florida. □

Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

		5	1	8	6			
			5			2		
4		8					3	
7	6				1			2
	8						7	
5	9	3						8
9	4		3				5	
8				2	4	9		
			9	6				

Difficulty Level ★★★

12/09

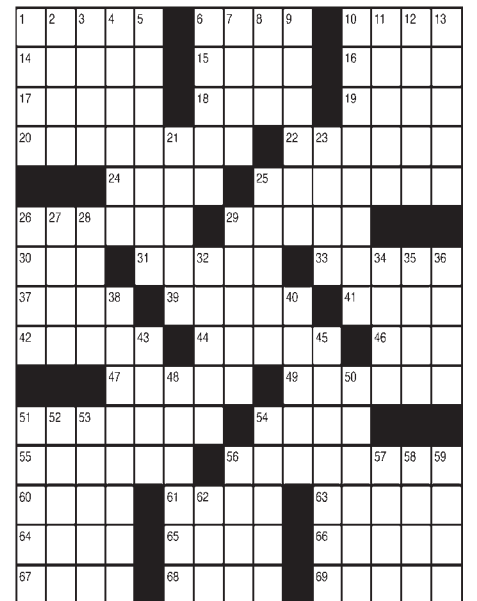
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

6	9	3	8	4	5	2	1	7
5	2	8	9	7	1	3	4	6
4	7	1	6	3	2	8	9	5
9	3	2	5	1	6	7	8	4
8	1	4	3	2	7	5	6	9
7	5	6	4	8	9	1	2	3
2	4	9	7	5	8	6	3	1
3	8	5	1	6	4	9	7	2
1	6	7	2	9	3	4	5	8

ACROSS

- 1 Frequently
- 6 Eve's man
- 10 Lion's neck hair
- 14 On one's own
- 15 Evans or Robertson
- 16 Skunk's defense
- 17 __ firma; dry land
- 18 Leave out
- 19 Hideaway
- 20 Elected officials
- 22 Go by, as time
- 24 Trait transmitter
- 25 Lifted up
- 26 Sign of affection
- 29 Deserves
- 30 __, dos, tres...
- 31 __ on; reveals the offenses of
- 33 J. Paul or Estelle
- 37 Celebrity
- 39 Cup-shaped flower



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/9/15

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

ARK	SPANS	HERO
BAIL	CANOE	AVID
CITE	HITOR	RACE
DEADENING	ASKS	
DAMS	ESS	
VIRILE	PRAISING	
AGONY	JAUNT	NOR
SLUG	PETIT	WASA
EON	GREEN	LINEN
SODA	POPS	RUDEST
CAB	MIKE	
LIST	ACCIDENTS	
ONTO	BLASE	EATS
STAR	LATER	DRIP
SOBS	EWERS	PRY

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12/9/15

- 4 Infuriate
- 5 Most orderly
- 6 Venerate
- 7 Aswan and Hoover
- 8 Heavyweight Muhammad
- 9 Shooting star
- 10 Ingredient in baked beans
- 11 Alter to fit
- 12 Racket
- 13 Miscalculated
- 21 Beginning
- 23 "So __!"; casual farewell
- 25 __ training; boot camp
- 26 Part of a tooth
- 27 "Nay" voter
- 28 Reddish horse
- 29 Actress Burstyn
- 32 Enticed
- 34 Truck scale divisions
- 35 __-blue; loyal
- 36 Strong desires
- 38 Sets free
- 40 __ with; tolerate

DOWN

- 1 Dobbin's dinner
- 2 Escape
- 3 Feeling mixed emotions

- 43 Soil
- 45 Boat race
- 48 Big enough fish
- 50 Antenna
- 51 2012 winner
- 52 Kick back
- 53 Male duck
- 54 Gets well
- 56 Agile
- 57 Qualified
- 58 Layer of a wedding cake
- 59 "Krakatoa, __ of Java"; film for Maximilian Schell
- 62 Motorists' assn.

Classifieds

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24/7



UN: malaria cases drop but progress in Africa is slower

MARIA CHENG
AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — The number of malaria cases worldwide has dropped in recent years but the countries with the biggest outbreaks have made the least progress, according to a new report Tuesday by the World Health Organization.

The vast majority of malaria cases and deaths are in Africa, where countries have achieved "slower-than-average declines" of about 32 percent in the last 15 years, the U.N. health agency said. Elsewhere, cases have dropped by about half. Malaria is a mosquito-borne parasitic disease that mostly strikes children under 5.

WHO estimated there were about 214 million cases of malaria and 438,000 deaths this year but those estimates are based mostly on modeling. The U.N. health agency said data is so bad for 31 countries in Africa — including those believed to have the worst outbreaks — that it couldn't tell if cases have been rising or falling in the last 15 years.

WHO is hoping to wipe out malaria by 2040 despite not having an effective vaccine for it and increasing resistance problems to both drugs and insecticides used to kill mosquitoes.

The world's first malaria vaccine was recommended for approval this year, but it only protects about one-third of children and multiple doses are required. WHO has recommended that more studies be done before deciding how countries should use it. □

Scientists enlist big gun for climate action: Faith

SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

PARIS (AP) — The cold hard numbers of science haven't spurred the world to curb runaway global warming. So as climate negotiators struggle in Paris, some scientists who appealed to the rational brain are enlisting what many would consider a higher power: the majesty of faith.

It's not God versus science, but followers of God and science together trying to save humanity and the planet, they say. Physicist John Schellnhuber, founder of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, said he has been coming to these international talks for 11 years and essentially seen negotiators throw up their hands and say "sorry guys we tried our best." And no one protested. But this time, with the power of Pope Francis' encyclical earlier this year calling global warming a moral issue and an even more energized interfaith community, Schellnhuber feels the world's faithful are watching and will hold world leaders accountable.

"They know they will be measured against the encyclical," Schellnhuber, a member of the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences, said Saturday at a Catholic Church event. Ever the scientist, Schellnhuber said on Saturday he hadn't seen any evidence yet during the first week of negotiations that this will happen, but he has faith it will.

In the first five days of climate negotiations, interfaith activists came, fasted, talked to media, buttonholed leaders and

prayed. On Saturday night in a downtown Paris chapel, hundreds of people, many of them prostrated on the ground, sang and prayed for the climate ne-

30 years or so it's not been that successful in achieving its goals," Joe Ware of Christian Aid wrote in an email from the Paris talks. "Increasingly it has looked

He was presenting a paper on glacier melt to the scientists at the pontifical academy. It was academic and laid out the conclusions in cold hard



Brother Alois addresses people at an interfaith service for world leaders to curb global warming during a multi-lingual service at Church St Ignatius in Paris, France. As climate negotiators struggle in Paris, some scientists who appealed to the rationale brain are enlisting what many would consider a higher power: the majesty of faith.
(Marie Renaux/Taize via AP)

gotiators and mostly for the world.

Faith "is much deeper" than science, said Caroline Bader of the Geneva-based Lutheran World Federation.

And so are their numbers. Bader said interfaith leaders recently handed top United Nations negotiators a petition with 1.8 million signatures begging for meaningful climate action. Such action was also sought by Brother Alois Taize, a Catholic member of the ecumenical monastery, as he was preaching at the song-laden service about how the faithful and the world have to open their eyes to solutions to global warming.

"The environment movement, which has primarily been a secular one, has realized that over the last

to faith groups for help in mobilizing a broader movement of people calling for action on climate change. They are actually natural allies as almost all faiths have a theology of creation care at their heart."

Scripps Institution of Oceanography scientist Veerabhadran Ramanathan, a non-Catholic who advised Pope Francis on climate and is on the pontiff's science academy, says he thinks this new alliance will play a major role in what he hopes will be a historic agreement.

But for Ramanathan, now a member of the Holy See's delegation to the climate talks, it's more than science or history. About four years ago he had a moment that he called "a revelation."

facts. But then the chancellor to the academy, a bishop, added one sentence to the end: "If we want justice and peace, we must protect the habitat that sustains us."

It was quickly agreed to and Ramanathan started to look at climate science not as an academic issue but an issue of justice, because those who are hurt the most by climate change are the world's poorest 3 billion. He started volunteering, working with the poor and examining his own consumption habits, like how much he drives.

Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, said Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si* is less about ecology than morality and fairness. □

Eagles of Death Metal members revisit Paris attack site



A member of the band Eagles of Death Metal, Jesse Hughes pays his respects to 89 victims who died in a Nov. 13 attack, at the Bataclan concert hall in Paris, France, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015. Members of the California rock band Eagles of Death Metal are back at the ravaged Paris theater where they survived a massacre by Islamic extremist suicide bombers.

(AP Photo/Jacques Brinon)

OLEG CETINIC
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Members of Eagles of Death Metal on Tuesday revisited the rav-

aged Paris theater where they survived a massacre by Islamic extremist suicide bombers.

Solemn and silent, they came to the now-shuttered Bataclan theater in eastern Paris, whose facade has become a shrine to the 89 people killed inside. Band members laid flowers at the site under a persistent December rain, some embracing as they stared at the wreaths, notes and banners heaped in mourning and tribute.

Singer Jesse Hughes covered his face as he paced back and forth. Drummer Julian Dorio wiped away tears.

On that fateful Friday night, the band members dispersed to escape the carnage, one running upstairs, others slipping out a side door. They all ended up at the police station.

Drummer Julien Dorio said in an emotional interview with Vice and HBO that he

"bailed off my stool" with the initial shots.

"I saw two guys out front, and that might be the most awful thing ever, is them relentlessly shooting into the audience," he said.

Co-founder Hughes said in the interview that he wants the group to return to the Bataclan when the concert venue reopens.

The band made a surprise return to Paris and performed with U2 on Monday night, their first onstage appearance since the Nov. 13 attacks that killed 130 people overall in Paris.

U2 were playing the last of four concerts in Paris, two of which had been postponed when France announced a state of emergency following the attacks.

U2 frontman Bono told the audience they said he wanted to introduce "some people whose lives will forever be a part of this city of Paris." □

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ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi, a true native Aruban started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced hand rolled cigars called "Aruhiba". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba. Petrocchi always had a interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crops. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba, he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba Cigars in Aruba. The whole process took him 10 years to perfect. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the moulding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. Their handmade cigar box is specially designed with their "Aruhiba" logo. Petrocchi considers

Aruhiba as a promotion for Aruba through its fine cigars. The company sells Aruhiba to the international markets as well. Visit their retail store located in front of the Historic Dutch Windmill in front of the RIO Hotel, with any purchase of \$20 and up you receive a free "Aruhiba" cigar or ask for their gift box of 5 cigars get 1 FREE for only \$37. They open from Monday to Saturday from 9 am till 6:30 pm and on Sundays from 10 am to 4 pm. Aruhiba cigars are now available at the gift stores in your resort and at well-known cigar stores. For their complete selection and attractive by the box prices visit their retail store. Tours are also



Owner Benjamin Petrocchi

available at their Tobacco farm where their cigars are grown and rolled. Winner of the best of Aruba. The best local product. Cigars in Tubes Arubian design.



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Review: In 'The Big Short,' a bet against America pays off

JAKE COYLE
AP Film Writer


In Adam McKay's comic and clear-eyed adaption

of Michael Lewis' "The Big Short," a handful of finance speculators — outsiders and oddballs — predict a

downturn in the housing market only to realize, to their horror and immense profit, that they've effec-

antic style, leaving his starry cast — including Steve Carell, Christian Bale, Ryan Gosling and Brad Pitt —

Rickert (Pitt), a retired veteran who now disdains Wall Street. Sifting through the data, they each come



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THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY PART 2

JENNIFER LAWRENCE | JOSH HUTCHERSON

MON-THURS 5:05 | 8:00
FRI 5:05 | 8:00 | 10:55
SAT 2:25 | 5:05 | 8:00 | 10:55
SUN & HOL 2:25 | 5:05 | 8:00

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

MIDNIGHT SHOW WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 16 TH, 11:55 PM

CREED

MICHAEL B. JORDAN | SYLVESTER STALLONE

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-THURS 3:55 | 6:20 | 9:10
FRI 3:55 | 6:20 | 9:10 | 12:05
SAT 3:30 | 6:20 | 9:10 | 12:05
SUN & HOL 3:30 | 6:20 | 9:10

KRAMPUS

ADAM SCOTT | TONI COLLETTE

MON-THURS 5:05 | 7:20 | 9:35
FRI 5:05 | 7:20 | 9:35 | 11:50
SAT 2:50 | 5:05 | 7:20 | 9:35 | 11:50
SUN & HOL 2:50 | 5:05 | 7:20 | 9:35

THE GOOD DINOSAUR

JEFFREY WRIGHT | FRANCES MCDORMAND

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-FRI 4:50 | 7:05
SAT 2:35 | 4:50 | 7:05
SUN & HOL 2:35 | 4:50 | 7:05

THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY PART 2

JENNIFER LAWRENCE | JOSH HUTCHERSON

MON-FRI 9:10
SAT 9:10
SUN & HOL 9:10

SPECTRE 007

DANIEL CRAIG | CHRISTOPH WALTZ

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-THURS 5:45 | 8:50
FRI 5:45 | 8:50
SAT 2:40 | 5:45 | 8:50
SUN & HOL 2:40 | 5:45 | 8:50

VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

DANIEL RADCLIFF | JAMES MCAVOY

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

MON-THURS 9:20
FRI-SAT 9:20 | 11:45
SUN & HOL 9:20

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This photo shows, Rafe Spall, from left, as Danny Moses, Jeremy Strong as Vinnie Daniel, Steve Carell as Mark Baum, Ryan Gosling as Jared Vennett and Jeffry Griffin as Chris, in the film, "The Big Short," from Paramount Pictures and Regency Enterprises.

(Jaap Buitendijk/Paramount Pictures via AP)

tively bet against America, and won.

It's a rollicking, outrage-fueled odyssey through the financial collapse of 2008, from the carefree offices on Wall Street to the vacant subdivisions in Florida, that gradually reveals not just a market bubble but a colossally bankrupt system and a nation that blissfully teetered into absurdity.

As one of the pre-eminent comedy directors, McKay has shifted into a more realistic, dramatic world only to find a farce too ridiculous for satire. And as anyone who has been paying attention to McKay's comedies can attest, his humor has always come laced with biting political subtext: the TV news of "Anchor-man," George W. Bush-era America in "Talladega Nights," white collar crime in "The Other Guys."

He has kept his loose and

ample room for improvising. They are part of the enticements of "The Big Short," which strains hard to make the complex finance of its subject digestible and entertaining, including occasional instructional interludes from the likes of Margot Robbie (in a bubble bath), Anthony Bourdain and Selena Gomez — eye candies for brief explanations of collateralized-debt obligations and other instruments of financial minutia.

Our central characters are a foursome of (mostly) unrelated investors. There's the glass-eyed, heavy metal-listening trader Michael Burry (Bale), a the brash-talking banker Jared Vennett (Gosling); a cynical hedge fund manager Mark Baum (Carell); and two young investors (John Magaro and Finn Wittrock) who are mentored by Ben

to the conclusion that the bedrock of the U.S. economy — the housing market — has quietly been weakening. When everyone is riding the market to record highs, they swim against the tide. The story of the 2008 crisis has, of course, been told many times before. The best portrait of the era's out-of-control excesses was Martin Scorsese's "The Wolf of Wall Street" (set in the '80s and '90s but made in the wake of the 2008 collapse). None captured the personal pain more than Ramin Bahrani's eviction drama "99 Homes," released earlier this year. What sets "The Big Short" apart is its steadily accumulating rage. It's a movie for that modern American experience of looking around and seeing so much corporate corruption that one's head might explode. □

POP LIFE

And the Kimye baby's name is Saint West

LOS ANGELES (AP) — And the baby de jour's name is ... Saint West. Kim Kardashian West and hubby Kanye announced the name of their new boy via Twitter and her app. Daughter North's brother was born Saturday, weighing in at 8 pounds, 1 ounce. Kardashian West has tracked her pregnancy online for her 37 million Twitter followers, posting an image late Friday of her bare belly with the caption, "Ready whenever you are lol." North was born in 2013.

Paltrow's Goop pop-up shop in NY gets robbed

NEW YORK (AP) — Authorities are searching for three men who robbed Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop pop-up shop in New York City of more than \$173,000 worth of jewelry and watches. It happened Saturday afternoon at the lifestyle website's temporary store inside The Shops at Columbus Circle in midtown Manhattan's Time Warner Center. The store had one of its busiest days Saturday. Police say one of the suspects used some kind of object to open a cabinet containing the merchandise while the employees were distracted.

Stewart returns to 'Daily Show' to push 9/11 act

NEW YORK (AP) — Comedian Jon Stewart has returned to "The Daily Show" where he made a push to renew a law that provides health benefits for first responders who became ill after the Sept. 11 terror attacks. Stewart was a guest on "The Daily Show With Trevor Noah" on Monday night. Stewart urged, badgered and exhorted Congress, especially Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, to pass the Zadroga Act. □

Q&A:

'The Force' director on best way to watch his movie

LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — J.J. Abrams can't really settle on a favorite moment from his saga of directing, co-writing and co-producing "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," but this one isn't bad. "Being here now means we're actually finished with the movie, which is a relief," Abrams said with Jedi

sponded with an answer. What you realize, by the way, in working on these movies is that even things that are canon, that are beloved and absolute to fans, are very much fluid and in flux. For example, the Millennium Falcon itself, the cockpit changed dramatically from the first to the second movie. It's much bigger in "The Empire

I was watching the reels in 3-D, there were a number of shots — and I know this sounds insane — that I hadn't understood in the three-dimensional space quite the way I did when I saw them in 3-D. I actually felt that there were things that were playing better in 3-D. I had never felt that before. And if people have access to a theater that

kind of an engine. Though I love that we all have access to movies on the devices in our pockets and I love that home screens are often better than theater 17 at the multiplex, I also feel like movies speak to a human desire, if not need, to congregate and to experience stories communally. They're experiences that allow us to feel that connectivity, which is truly what "Star Wars" is all about — the Force and the idea that we're all connected. In whatever format it is, whatever screening, whatever the best available version is, I would just argue that, if possible, to try to see it with a crowd.

AP: This has been one of the most tightly guarded, high-profile releases in film history. When do you think it's appropriate for audiences to start talking and posting about spoilers?

ABRAMS: I think that as people do and as I'm sure that they will, after the first screening of this movie, that aspect will be over, the secrecy. It's not so much that we feel like the movie doesn't work if you know what happens, but I do feel like part of the magic of a movie, and certainly "Star Wars," is to know as little as possible for as long as possible. But I know that people will start talking about what happens immediately.

AP: Are you at peace with your decision to directly only one?

ABRAMS: It's a bittersweet choice. On one hand, I felt like if this movie works for people, then that's the way you want to go out. You don't want to necessarily have to top something that worked. And if it's a disaster, no one would want me to direct the next one anyway. It was only a win. □



This Sunday, Dec. 6, 2015 photo shows director/producer J.J. Abrams during a promotion for the new film, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" in Los Angeles. The film opens in U.S. theaters on Dec. 18. (Photo by Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP)

calm. Perched in a small living room setup inside the cavernous Los Angeles Convention Center, this is the final stretch of Abrams' journey to this galaxy far, far away and back again, which started nearly three years ago.

The Associated Press spoke with Abrams at a weekend media event in advance of the Dec. 18th release of "The Force Awakens." The remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: Lucasfilm's creative executive Pablo Hidalgo helped you answer questions about the "Star Wars" universe during the making of the film. Did you ever stump him?

ABRAMS: He was not only unstumpable but he was immediate. I would send him an email at almost any hour asking some arcane question and I'd hit send and I'd hear "ding" and he'd already have re-

Strikes Back." Even things that are even the most fundamental and beloved are changing before our eyes and we don't even notice it.

AP: Was there anything you were surprised the powers that be let you do?

ABRAMS: I was most surprised that the studio never said no. That's incredible to me.

AP: What do you think is the ideal way to watch "The Force Awakens"?

ABRAMS: As someone who really hasn't been the most vocal advocate of 3-D, the strangest thing happened to me on this. When

has laser projection, it is shockingly better.

AP: Really?

ABRAMS: You cannot compare a traditionally projected image with a laser image. The blacks are true blacks. It's almost as if you have to adjust to it.

AP: But definitely theatrical?

ABRAMS: The thing that is so fun about "Star Wars," and I remember this from when I was a kid, was the communal experience of being with hundreds of people and getting to scream and laugh and cheer and cry with the story. It's got that kind of a pulse and that



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Beijing Schools Close as Some Residents Take Smog Holiday

IAN MADER

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Some residents took a smog holiday away from Beijing on Tuesday as the Chinese capital launched restrictions under its first red alert for pollution,

the price," Beijing office worker Cao Yong said during a break from work.

A grey soupy haze subsumed Beijing's unique landmarks, convenience stores sold air-filtering masks at brisk rates and health-

nearly all of China's north-east was affected, and many cities — including nearby Shijiazhuang — were even worse than Beijing.

After hearing of the school closings late Monday,

zation designates the safe level for the tiny, poisonous particles at 25.

Factory suspensions and several other restrictions will seek to reduce the dust and other particulate matter in the city of 22.5 million

prolonged bouts of severe smog, which is typically worse in the winter and which last time sent PM 2.5 level as high as 976 in some locations.

A red alert requires a forecast of 72 straight hours of pollution levels of 300 or higher on the city's air quality index.

The index is closely linked to levels of PM2.5, although it also includes other pollutants. As an example, one Beijing monitoring site at midday showed an index reading of 308 and a PM2.5 reading of 258.

Previous stretches of severe smog have lasted more than three days but without any red alert.

Beijing authorities said at the time that the initial forecasts were for less time so no alert was called for, but critics maintained they were seeking to avoid the toughest restrictions for political reasons.

Pressure from the central government and from the public resulted "in the Beijing city government releasing the red alert this time," Greenpeace environmental campaigner Dong Liang said in an interview. The WHO representative in China, Bernhard Schwartlaender, applauded Beijing's move as a sign that the city is taking air quality and health issues "very seriously."

China's polluted air has had severe health effects. A study led by atmospheric chemist Jos Lelieveld of Germany's Max Planck Institute and published in the journal *Nature* this year estimated 1.4 million people each year die prematurely because of China's pollution.

The world's biggest carbon emitter, China plans to upgrade coal power plants over the next five years to tackle the problem, and says its emissions will peak by around 2030 before starting to decline. Charcoal briquette-burning ovens that were once a major contributor to pollution are now much less common in Beijing, although they are still used widely in the countryside. □



A woman covers her face with a mask as she rushes to a subway station on a heavily polluted day in Beijing Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015. Beijing's red alerts for smog are as much about duration as they are about severity of pollution forecasts. The forecasting model must predict three or more days of smog with levels of 300 or higher on the city's air quality index - which typically would include having levels of dangerous PM 2.5 particles of about 10 times the safe level.

(AP Photo/Andy Wong)

closing schools, suspending factories and keeping half the vehicles off the streets. Although Beijing has in recent years seen smog at much worse levels than Tuesday's, the latest bout of pollution was the first to trigger a red alert under a 2-year-old system that requires a forecast at the outset of at least 72 hours of consecutive high pollution. The capital's hazardous smog has persisted despite the Chinese government's stated priority of cleaning up the legacy of pollution left from years of full-tilt economic growth. Most of the smog is blamed on coal-fired power plants, along with vehicle emissions, construction and factory work.

"This is modern life for Beijing people. We wanted to develop, and now we pay

food stores promoted pear juice as a traditional Chinese tonic for the lungs.

"And air purifiers at home are a must," Beijing resident Sun Yuanyuan said at a downtown Beijing juice shop.

Under restrictions in effect Tuesday through Thursday, schools were urged to close voluntarily unless they had good air filtration. However, Beijing's education commission later followed up with a separate order for schools to close during the three-day alert. Some residents grumbled about the inconvenience, and a few international schools sought permission to reopen Wednesday.

A slew of Beijingers said via social media they planned to escape the gloom. They needed to travel relatively far, however, because

Beijing mother Jiang Xia booked tickets for a 3,200 kilometer (2,000-mile) flight to the relatively clean southwestern city of Kunming, for herself and her 8-year-old daughter who she said suffers nosebleeds in the smog.

She said in an interview from Kunming that they hectically packed before dawn Tuesday for their flight.

"But when we arrived in Kunming and breathed in this clean, fresh air, I was very glad I made this move — a very wise decision," Jiang said.

Readings of PM2.5 particles climbed above 300 micrograms per cubic meter in some parts of the city Tuesday and were expected to continue rising before improving Thursday.

The World Health Organi-

people. Use of a car is restricted to every other day depending on its license plate, and officials planned to deploy extra subway trains and buses to compensate.

Some businesses closed and others said employees could work from home for the duration.

A Beijing resident who gave his only his surname, Du, said he was taking advantage of a lack of crowds near the capital's ancient Forbidden

City to stroll and take unique photographs.

"I like this kind of haziness. It gives a blurry feeling and makes you feel like you're in a dream," Du said.

While the capital's air improved in the first 10 months of the year compared with the same period last year, it has suffered two recent